

JOY LEARNING CENTER

COMMUNITY-BASED NEW MEXICO PREK PROGRAM

WELCOME

Dear Families,

Welcome to Joy Learning Center's Community-Based New Mexico PreK Program.

We are honored that you have chosen our program to be part of your child's early learning journey. We believe that the preschool years are the foundation for lifelong learning, and we are committed to providing a safe, nurturing, engaging, and developmentally appropriate environment where every child can grow academically, socially, emotionally, physically, and creatively.

At Joy Learning Center, we recognize that every child is unique. Our teachers respect each child's individual learning style, culture, language, interests, and abilities while creating meaningful experiences that encourage curiosity, independence, confidence, and a lifelong love of learning.

Our Community-Based NM PreK Program follows the standards established by the New Mexico Early Childhood Education and Care Department (ECECD). Through intentional teaching, play-based learning, family engagement, authentic assessment, and positive relationships, we prepare children for a successful transition into kindergarten and future academic success.

Families are the first and most important teachers in a child's life. We believe that a strong partnership between home and school creates the best possible learning experience. Throughout the school year, we encourage open communication, family participation, home visits, conferences, volunteer opportunities, and shared decision-making as we work together to support every child's development.

This handbook has been designed to help families understand our philosophy, daily operations, policies, expectations, and the many opportunities available through our NM PreK Program. We encourage you to read it carefully and keep it as a reference throughout the school year.

Thank you for trusting Joy Learning Center with your child's education.

We look forward to building a wonderful partnership with your family. **Sincerely,**

Nancy Alarcon
Director

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Alejandra Alarcon
Program Administrator

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ABOUT JOY LEARNING CENTER

Joy Learning Center is a licensed early childhood education center dedicated to providing high-quality educational experiences for young children and their families. Our Community-Based New Mexico PreK Program is designed to provide children with a strong educational foundation through meaningful learning experiences that promote school readiness while supporting each child's individual strengths, interests, and developmental needs.

Our classrooms provide a welcoming environment where children feel safe, respected, valued, and encouraged to explore the world around them. Learning takes place through play, exploration, hands-on activities, meaningful conversations, and positive relationships with teachers and peers.

We believe that children learn best when they are actively engaged in developmentally appropriate experiences that foster curiosity, creativity, problem-solving, communication, collaboration, and independence.

As a Community-Based NM PreK Program, Joy Learning Center works in partnership with the New Mexico Early Childhood Education and Care Department (ECECD) to provide high-quality early childhood education that reflects the values, diversity, and needs of New Mexico families.

Our commitment extends beyond the classroom. We strive to build meaningful partnerships with families, community organizations, early intervention providers, and local schools to ensure that every child receives the support necessary for lifelong success.

PHILOSOPHY

At Joy Learning Center, we believe that every child deserves a learning environment where they feel safe, loved, respected, and inspired to learn. We recognize children as capable, competent learners who construct knowledge through meaningful experiences, exploration, relationships, and play.

Our philosophy is grounded in the understanding that learning occurs through active engagement with people, materials, and the environment. Teachers intentionally create opportunities that support children's cognitive, language, literacy, mathematics, scientific thinking, creativity, physical development, and social-emotional growth. We value diversity and celebrate the unique cultures, languages, traditions, and experiences that every family brings to our program. We are committed to creating an inclusive environment where every child has equitable opportunities to participate, learn, and succeed.

Most importantly, we believe that families are children's first teachers. By working together with parents and caregivers, we create strong partnerships that support children's learning both at home and at school.

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Our Mission

At Joy Learning Center, our mission is to provide a safe, inclusive, and high-quality early childhood education program where every child has the opportunity to grow academically, socially, emotionally, physically, and creatively.

We are committed to creating meaningful learning experiences that respect each child's developmental stage, culture, language, interests, and individual strengths. Through intentional teaching, play-based learning, and strong family partnerships, we prepare children for lifelong learning and a successful transition to kindergarten.

As a Community-Based New Mexico PreK Program, we believe that families are children's first teachers. We value collaboration, communication, and mutual respect as essential components of every child's educational success.

Our commitment is to nurture confident learners, compassionate citizens, and curious thinkers while maintaining the highest standards established by the New Mexico Early Childhood Education and Care Department (ECECD).

Our Vision

Joy Learning Center envisions a learning community where every child feels safe, valued, respected, and inspired to reach their full potential.

Our vision is to become a model Community-Based NM PreK Program recognized for educational excellence, meaningful family engagement, inclusive practices, and continuous quality improvement.

We strive to create classrooms where children develop independence, creativity, critical thinking, problem-solving skills, and positive relationships while fostering a lifelong love of learning.

Together with families and community partners, we prepare children not only for kindergarten but for future academic success and responsible citizenship.

Core Values

Our program is guided by the following values:

Respect

Every child and family deserves to be treated with dignity, kindness, and respect.

Integrity

We conduct ourselves with honesty, professionalism, and accountability in every interaction.

Family Partnership

Families are essential partners in children's education and decision-making.

Inclusion

Every child belongs and deserves equitable opportunities to learn and participate.

Diversity

We celebrate the many cultures, languages, traditions, and experiences represented in our community.

Excellence

We continuously improve our practices through professional development, reflection, and collaboration.

Safety

The physical and emotional well-being of every child is our highest priority.

Collaboration

Children learn best when educators, families, and community partners work together.

Program Goals

The goals of the Community-Based NM PreK Program are to:

- Provide high-quality early childhood education.
- Promote school readiness across all developmental domains.
- Foster children's social-emotional competence.
- Support language and early literacy development.
- Encourage mathematical thinking and scientific inquiry.
- Promote physical health and healthy lifestyles.
- Develop creativity through art, music, movement, and dramatic play.
- Foster positive relationships among children, families, educators, and the community.
- Celebrate diversity and cultural responsiveness.
- Support each child's individual learning journey through inclusive educational practices.

School Readiness Philosophy

School readiness is much more than learning letters and numbers. At Joy Learning Center, we believe that children are ready for kindergarten when they have developed confidence, curiosity, independence, communication skills, problem-solving abilities, and positive relationships with others.

School readiness includes growth in:

- Social and Emotional Development
- Language and Literacy
- Cognitive Development
- Mathematics
- Science
- Creative Arts
- Physical Development
- Approaches to Learning
- Self-Help Skills
- Executive Function Skills

Teachers intentionally plan experiences that strengthen each of these areas while respecting every child's individual pace of development.

FAMILY ENGAGEMENT AND FAMILY PARTNERSHIP

Our Commitment to Families

At Joy Learning Center, we believe that families are children's first and most influential teachers. The partnership between home and school is one of the most important factors in a child's success. We are committed to creating meaningful, respectful, and collaborative relationships with every family.

Family engagement is more than participating in school events. It is an ongoing partnership built on communication, trust, shared decision-making, and mutual respect. Our educators work alongside families to support each child's learning, development, and well-being.

We recognize and respect the diversity of every family, including different cultures, languages, traditions, beliefs, and family structures. Every family is welcomed, valued, and encouraged to participate in our program.

Family Partnership

Families are active participants in every aspect of our program.

Our partnership includes:

- Open and respectful communication.
- Shared educational goals.
- Family participation in classroom activities.
- Home and school collaboration.
- Participation in conferences.
- Home visits.
- Program planning.
- Continuous communication regarding children's progress.
- Family feedback to improve program quality.

Working together allows us to better understand each child's strengths, interests, learning style, and individual needs.

Family Engagement Goals

Our Family Engagement Program is designed to:

- Build trusting relationships between families and educators.
- Support children's learning at home.
- Increase family participation in school activities.
- Encourage two-way communication.
- Promote cultural responsiveness.
- Provide educational resources for families.
- Support positive parenting practices.
- Connect families with community resources.
- Encourage leadership opportunities for families.

Home Visits

Home visits are an essential component of the New Mexico PreK Program. These visits provide an opportunity for teachers and families to establish positive relationships and gain a deeper understanding of each child's unique strengths, interests, routines, and developmental needs.

At Joy Learning Center, home visits are conducted respectfully and collaboratively. The purpose is not to evaluate the home environment but to strengthen the partnership between families and educators.

Whenever possible, one home visit will be conducted at the beginning of the school year before classroom instruction begins. Additional visits may be scheduled based on family needs or by mutual agreement.

During the home visit, teachers may:

- Learn about the child's interests.
- Discuss family goals.
- Review the child's strengths.
- Share information about classroom expectations.
- Explain daily routines.
- Answer family questions.
- Discuss school readiness.
- Build trusting relationships.

Participation is voluntary, and appointments are scheduled at times convenient for families.

Family Conferences

Joy Learning Center values regular communication regarding children's progress.

Family conferences provide opportunities to discuss:

- Developmental progress.
- Learning goals.
- Classroom observations.
- Assessment results.
- Social-emotional development.
- Family concerns.
- Next learning steps.

Formal conferences are scheduled throughout the school year. Families may also request additional conferences at any time.

Conference discussions remain confidential and are documented in each child's educational record.

Daily Communication

Open communication is encouraged every day.

Teachers communicate with families through:

- Daily conversations.
- Written notes.
- Monthly newsletters.
- Parent communication applications.
- Emails.
- Phone calls.
- Scheduled conferences.
- Family meetings.

Families are encouraged to share information regarding changes at home that may affect their child's learning or emotional well-being.

Parent Participation

Families are encouraged to participate in classroom experiences whenever possible.

Participation opportunities include:

- Reading stories.
- Sharing family traditions.
- Cultural presentations.
- Art projects.
- Classroom celebrations.
- Career presentations.
- Music activities.
- Outdoor learning experiences.
- Family literacy events.
- Volunteer opportunities.

Participation strengthens children's confidence while building meaningful relationships between families and educators.

Family Resources

Joy Learning Center provides information and referrals to community agencies that support children and families.

Resources may include:

- Early Intervention services.
- Health care providers.
- Dental services.
- Vision screenings.
- Behavioral health resources.
- Family counseling.
- Food assistance programs.
- Housing resources.
- Parenting workshops.
- Community events.

Staff members are available to assist families in locating appropriate services whenever needed.

Family Surveys

Family feedback is essential for continuous improvement.

Throughout the school year, families may be invited to complete confidential surveys regarding:

- Program quality.
- Communication.
- Curriculum.
- Family engagement.
- Classroom environment.
- Staff relationships.
- Overall satisfaction.

Survey results are reviewed by administration and used to improve program quality.

Parent Leadership Opportunities

Joy Learning Center encourages families to become leaders within our program.

Families may participate by:

- Serving on advisory committees.
- Assisting with family events.
- Sharing professional expertise.
- Participating in program planning.
- Providing feedback during annual evaluations.
- Supporting community projects.

Strong family leadership contributes to a stronger learning community for everyone.

CURRICULUM, TEACHING, AND LEARNING

Our Educational Philosophy

At Joy Learning Center, we believe that young children learn best through meaningful relationships, active exploration, hands-on experiences, and purposeful play. Every interaction, routine, and classroom activity is viewed as an opportunity to support children's learning and development.

Our Community-Based New Mexico PreK Program provides a developmentally appropriate learning environment where children are encouraged to ask questions, investigate ideas, solve problems, communicate with others, and develop confidence as lifelong learners.

Teachers intentionally design learning experiences that are responsive to each child's developmental level, interests, strengths, cultural background, language, and individual needs.

Learning is joyful, engaging, and meaningful.

Curriculum

Joy Learning Center implements a curriculum approved by the **New Mexico Early Childhood Education and Care Department (ECECD)**. The curriculum is designed to promote children's development through integrated, play-based, and culturally responsive learning experiences. This aligns with the approach already described in your handbook.

The curriculum addresses all major developmental domains, including:

- Social and Emotional Development
- Language and Literacy
- Cognitive Development
- Early Mathematics
- Scientific Inquiry
- Creative Arts
- Physical Development
- Health and Wellness

- Approaches to Learning

Teachers intentionally integrate these domains into daily classroom experiences rather than teaching them as isolated subjects.

Learning Through Play

Play is the foundation of early childhood education.

Children learn by:

- Exploring materials.
- Asking questions.
- Experimenting.
- Pretending.
- Building.
- Creating.
- Investigating.
- Collaborating with peers.
- Solving real-world problems.

Purposeful play encourages children to develop language, creativity, executive functioning, self-regulation, and problem-solving skills while fostering a love of learning.

Teachers carefully observe children's play and intentionally extend learning through questions, conversations, and planned experiences.

Learning Environment

Each classroom is intentionally organized into clearly defined learning centers that promote independence, exploration, creativity, and collaboration.

Typical learning centers include:

- Library and Literacy Center
- Writing Center
- Blocks and Construction

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- Dramatic Play
- Science and Discovery
- Art Studio
- Sensory Exploration
- Math and Manipulatives
- Music and Movement
- Fine Motor Center

Learning materials are accessible to children and rotated regularly to reflect current interests, developmental needs, classroom themes, and seasonal experiences.

School Readiness Goals

The primary goal of the NM PreK Program is to prepare children for a successful transition to kindergarten by supporting their overall development.

Joy Learning Center promotes school readiness through intentional experiences that strengthen children's ability to:

- Develop positive relationships.
- Express thoughts and feelings.
- Solve problems independently.
- Follow routines.
- Demonstrate self-control.
- Communicate effectively.
- Listen and participate in group discussions.
- Explore books and early writing.
- Understand early mathematical concepts.
- Investigate scientific ideas.
- Develop healthy habits.
- Build confidence and independence.

School readiness is viewed as a partnership among children, families, teachers, and the community.

Intentional Teaching

Teachers intentionally plan daily learning experiences based on:

- Classroom observations.
- Children's interests.
- Developmental assessments.

- Family input.
- School readiness goals.
- Individual learning needs.

Instruction includes:

- Large group experiences.
- Small group instruction.
- Individualized learning.
- Learning centers.
- Outdoor exploration.
- Music and movement.
- Hands-on investigations.
- Project-based learning.

Social-Emotional Learning

Positive relationships form the foundation of all learning.

Teachers intentionally support children's ability to:

- Recognize emotions.
- Build friendships.
- Cooperate with others.
- Solve conflicts peacefully.
- Develop empathy.
- Demonstrate self-regulation.
- Build self-confidence.

Children are encouraged to express their feelings appropriately while learning strategies to manage emotions independently.

Outdoor Learning

Outdoor experiences are considered an extension of the classroom.

Children participate in daily outdoor learning whenever weather conditions are safe.

Outdoor experiences promote:

- Gross motor development.
- Scientific exploration.
- Nature investigations.
- Social interaction.

- Healthy lifestyles.
- Problem-solving.
- Risk assessment.
- Creativity.

Children are encouraged to explore the natural environment while developing respect for nature and their community.

Multicultural Education

Joy Learning Center embraces the diversity of New Mexico and values the many cultures, languages, traditions, and experiences represented within our community.

Teachers intentionally incorporate multicultural experiences throughout the curriculum by:

- Reading culturally diverse literature.
- Celebrating family traditions respectfully.
- Exploring world cultures.
- Including multicultural learning materials.
- Encouraging children to share their home experiences.
- Supporting bilingual language development.

Every child deserves to see themselves and their family positively represented within the classroom environment.

Dual Language Learners

Joy Learning Center recognizes bilingualism as an asset.

Children who are learning more than one language are encouraged to continue developing their home language while acquiring English.

Teachers support Dual Language Learners by:

- Respecting children's home language.
- Using visual support.
- Incorporating songs, stories, and vocabulary in both languages when appropriate.
- Partnering with families to understand children's language development.
- Creating meaningful opportunities for communication throughout the day.

We believe that maintaining a child's first language strengthens identity, family relationships, and future academic success.

ASSESSMENT, CHILD DEVELOPMENT, AND INDIVIDUALIZED LEARNING

Our Philosophy of Assessment

Assessment is an ongoing process that helps teachers understand each child's unique strengths, interests, developmental progress, and learning needs.

At Joy Learning Center, assessment is never used to compare children with one another. Instead, it helps teachers make informed decisions about instruction and provide individualized learning experiences that support each child's development.

Assessment is continuous, authentic, and integrated into everyday classroom experiences.

Children are observed while they:

- Play independently
- Interact with peers
- Participating in small-group activities
- Engage in classroom discussions
- Explore learning centers
- Solving problems
- Create artwork
- Listen to stories
- Participating in outdoor learning
- Complete daily routines

These observations allow teachers to understand how children learn naturally.

Authentic Assessment

Authentic assessment means evaluating children through real-life experiences rather than formal testing.

Teachers gather information by observing children's participation in daily classroom activities.

Examples include:

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- Conversations with children
- Classroom observations
- Children's drawings and artwork
- Writing samples
- Photographs of learning experiences
- Anecdotal notes
- Checklists
- Portfolios
- Family input

This process provides a complete picture of each child's growth over time.

Assessment information is used to:

- Plan instruction
- Modify classroom activities
- Identify children's interests
- Support individual learning goals
- Celebrate progress
- Share information with families

Observation

Observation is one of the most valuable teaching tools used in early childhood education.

Teachers intentionally observe children throughout the day to understand how they:

- Learn
- Communication
- Solve problems
- Build relationships
- Express emotions
- Develop independence
- Participate in classroom routines

Observations are objective, confidential, and developmentally appropriate.

Documentation collected through observation becomes part of each child's educational record.

Child Portfolios

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Each child has an individual learning portfolio that documents growth throughout the school year.

Portfolios may include:

- Drawings
- Writing samples
- Art projects
- Photographs
- Teacher observations
- Developmental checklists
- Family contributions
- Learning stories
- Assessment summaries

Portfolios help teachers and families see each child's progress over time and celebrate achievements.

Families are encouraged to review their child's portfolio during conferences and throughout the school year.

Developmental Screenings

Joy Learning Center conducts developmental screenings to identify children's strengths and determine whether additional support may be beneficial.

Developmental screenings are not diagnostic evaluations.

Instead, they provide valuable information that helps teachers and families monitor children's development and make informed decisions regarding learning and support services.

ASQ-3

The Ages & Stages Questionnaires®, Third Edition (ASQ-3), is a developmental screening tool used to monitor children's progress across multiple developmental areas.

The ASQ-3 evaluates:

- Communication

- Gross Motor
- Fine Motor
- Problem Solving
- Personal-Social Development

The screening is completed with family participation because parents know their children better than anyone else.

Results help teachers:

- Better understand children's development.
- Plan classroom experiences.
- Monitor developmental progress.
- Identify children who may benefit from additional support.

Screenings are completed only after obtaining written parent or guardian consent.

ASQ:SE-2

The Ages & Stages Questionnaires®: Social-Emotional, Second Edition (ASQ:SE-2), focuses on children's social-emotional development.

This screening helps identify strengths related to:

- Self-regulation
- Emotional expression
- Social interaction
- Cooperation
- Independence
- Behavior
- Relationships

Teachers and families work together to review results and determine appropriate strategies to support children's social-emotional growth.

Individual Learning Plans

Assessment information helps teachers develop individualized learning opportunities for every child.

Teachers consider:

- Children's interests
- Developmental needs

- Assessment results
- Family goals
- Classroom observations

Individual learning plans may include:

- Additional learning experiences
- Small-group instruction
- Individualized support
- Classroom accommodation
- Family activities to reinforce learning at home

These plans are flexible and adjusted throughout the year as children grow and develop.

Family Participation in Assessment

Families play an essential role in the assessment process.

Parents and guardians are invited to:

- Share observations from home.
- Participate in developmental screenings.
- Review assessment results.
- Attend family conferences.
- Help establish learning goals.
- Celebrate children's progress.

Teachers value family input because children's learning occurs across many environments, not only at school.

Referral Process

If classroom observations and developmental screenings indicate that a child may benefit from additional evaluation, teachers will communicate their observations with the family in a respectful and confidential manner.

With family consent, the program may provide information regarding community resources or Early Intervention services.

The referral process is designed to provide support—not to label children—and decisions are always made collaboratively with families.

Confidentiality of Assessment Information

All assessment information is considered confidential.

Records are securely maintained and shared only with:

- Parents or legal guardians
- Authorized Joy Learning Center staff
- Professionals authorized by the family through written consent
- Agencies when required by law

Assessment information is never shared with unauthorized individuals.

Protecting children's privacy is an essential responsibility of Joy Learning Center.

INCLUSION, INDIVIDUALIZED SUPPORT, AND SOCIAL-EMOTIONAL DEVELOPMENT

Our Commitment to Inclusion

Joy Learning Center believes that every child deserves the opportunity to learn, grow, and thrive in an inclusive environment where they feel safe, respected, valued, and accepted.

We recognize that children develop at different rates and bring unique strengths, abilities, languages, cultures, interests, and learning styles to the classroom. Diversity enriches our learning community, and we are committed to creating an environment where every child has equitable access to meaningful educational experiences.

Our goal is to remove barriers to learning by providing developmentally appropriate supports that allows every child to participate fully in classroom activities alongside their peers.

Inclusive Practices

Teachers intentionally create learning environments that support all children by:

- Providing individualized instruction.
- Using flexible teaching strategies.
- Adapting classroom materials when appropriate.
- Offering visual support.
- Creating predictable daily routines.
- Supporting children's communication needs.
- Encouraging peer relationships.
- Promoting independence.

- Celebrating individual strengths.

Inclusive education benefits every child by promoting empathy, acceptance, cooperation, and respect for differences.

Individualized Support

Every child develops at their own pace.

Teachers continuously observe children's progress and provide individualized learning opportunities based on:

- Developmental observations.
- Authentic assessment.
- Family input.
- Children's interests.
- Classroom performance.
- Developmental screenings.

Support may include:

- Small-group instruction.
- Individual coaching.
- Environmental modifications.
- Additional practice opportunities.
- Visual schedules.
- Sensory support.
- Flexible learning materials.

Our goal is to ensure that every child experience success.

Collaboration with Families

Families are essential partners in supporting children's development.

Teachers and families work together by:

- Sharing observations.
- Discussing developmental progress.
- Identifying children's strengths.
- Establishing learning goals.
- Developing consistent strategies between home and school.

- Celebrating children's achievements.

Regular communication helps ensure that children receive consistent support across all learning environments.

Early Intervention Services

When concerns about a child's development arise, Joy Learning Center partners with families to provide information regarding available community resources.

With written family consent, the program may collaborate with:

- Early Intervention providers.
- Developmental specialists.
- Speech-language pathologists.
- Occupational therapists.
- Physical therapists.
- Behavioral health professionals.
- Educational consultants.

Our role is to support families throughout the process while respecting their decisions and maintaining confidentiality.

Individualized Family Service Plan (IFSP)

Some children may receive services through an Individualized Family Service Plan (IFSP).

When families provide written authorization, Joy Learning Center collaborates with service providers to support the child's participation in the classroom.

Teachers may participate in planning meetings, implement recommended strategies within daily routines, and communicate regularly with families and specialists.

The goal is to provide consistent support across home, school, and therapeutic settings.

Individualized Education Program (IEP)

Children who qualify for services through an Individualized Education Program (IEP) are welcomed into our program whenever appropriate supports can be provided.

Joy Learning Center works collaboratively with:

- Families.

- Local school districts.
- Related service providers.
- Early childhood specialists.

Teachers incorporate appropriate accommodations into classroom routines while maintaining high expectations for every child's participation and success.

Collaboration with Therapists

Joy Learning Center values collaboration with professionals who provide services to children enrolled in our program.

With parent or guardian permission, therapists may:

- Observe children in the classroom.
- Provide consultation to teachers.
- Deliver services according to approved plans.
- Recommend classroom strategies.
- Participate in team meetings.

All visits are coordinated through administration to ensure minimal disruption to classroom routines and maintain confidentiality.

Social-Emotional Development

Social-emotional development is essential to school readiness and lifelong success.

Teachers intentionally support children's ability to:

- Build positive relationships.
- Develop self-confidence.
- Recognize emotions.
- Express feelings appropriately.
- Demonstrate empathy.
- Solve problems peacefully.
- Develop resilience.
- Follow classroom expectations.
- Make responsible choices.

Every interaction throughout the day is viewed as an opportunity to teach social-emotional skills.

Positive Behavior Support

At Joy Learning Center, behavior is viewed as a form of communication.

Teachers seek to understand the purpose behind children's behavior while teaching appropriate replacement skills.

Positive behavior support focuses on:

- Prevention.
- Teaching expectations.
- Building relationships.
- Creating supportive environments.
- Reinforcing positive behavior.
- Problem-solving.
- Emotional coaching.

Teachers respond calmly, respectfully, and consistently while helping children develop self-regulation skills.

Punitive or humiliating practices are never used.

The Pyramid Model

Joy Learning Center implements practices consistent with the **Pyramid Model** to promote children's social-emotional competence.

The Pyramid Model emphasizes four levels of support:

1. Nurturing and Responsive Relationships

Children thrive when they experience warm, caring, and responsive relationships with adults and peers.

Teachers intentionally build trusting relationships with every child and family.

2. High-Quality Supportive Environments

Classrooms are organized to encourage independence, engagement, cooperation, and successful participation.

Teachers establish predictable routines, clearly defined expectations, and engaging learning environments.

3. Targeted Social-Emotional Supports

Some children benefit from explicit instruction in social-emotional skills.

Teachers intentionally teach:

- Friendship skills.
- Emotional vocabulary.
- Problem-solving.
- Self-regulation.
- Cooperation.
- Conflict resolution.

These skills are integrated throughout the daily routine.

4. Intensive Individualized Interventions

When children require additional support, individualized plans are developed collaboratively with families and appropriate professionals.

Strategies are based on observations, assessment information, and the child's strengths.

The goal is always to help children participate successfully within the classroom community.

Family Collaboration During Challenging Behaviors

When behavioral concerns arise, teachers partner with families to develop consistent strategies.

Together we:

- Share observations.
- Identify possible triggers.
- Discuss children's strengths.
- Develop common expectations.
- Monitor progress.
- Celebrate improvements.

Families are informed promptly of significant concerns, and collaborative planning is used to support positive outcomes.

Commitment to Belonging

Every child deserves to feel that they belong.

Joy Learning Center is committed to creating classrooms where children are accepted for who they are, encouraged to reach their full potential, and supported through positive relationships, individualized instruction, and collaborative partnerships with families.

GUIDANCE, CLASSROOM EXPECTATIONS, AND CHILDREN'S RIGHTS

Our Philosophy of Positive Guidance

At Joy Learning Center, we believe that every child deserves to learn in a safe, caring, respectful, and emotionally supportive environment. Children are continuously learning how to express emotions, build relationships, solve problems, and make responsible choices.

Rather than focusing on punishment, our educators teach, model, and reinforce appropriate behaviors through guidance, encouragement, consistency, and positive relationships.

Our goal is to help every child develop self-control, confidence, responsibility, empathy, and independence.

Positive guidance is integrated throughout the daily routine and reflects the values of the New Mexico PreK Program.

Building Positive Relationships

Children learn best when they feel emotionally safe.

Teachers intentionally build strong relationships by:

- Greeting each child warmly every day.
- Listening respectfully to children's ideas.
- Encouraging independence.
- Recognizing children's efforts.
- Helping children solve problems.
- Creating predictable routines.
- Respecting individual differences.
- Supporting children's emotional needs.

Positive relationships create the foundation for all learning.

Classroom Expectations

Teachers establish classroom expectations that are developmentally appropriate, clearly taught, and consistently reinforced.

Children are encouraged to:

- Treat others with kindness and respect.
- Use gentle hands and kind words.
- Listen when others are speaking.
- Care for classroom materials.
- Help clean up after activities.
- Solve problems peacefully.
- Take responsibility for their choices.
- Respect personal space.
- Follow classroom routines.
- Work cooperatively with others.

Expectations are taught through modeling, practice, visual reminders, songs, stories, and daily conversations.

Teaching Social Skills

Social skills are taught throughout the day.

Teachers provide opportunities for children to learn how to:

- Share materials.
- Take turns.
- Ask for help.
- Express emotions appropriately.
- Solve conflicts.
- Cooperate with peers.
- Respect differences.
- Show empathy.
- Build friendships.
- Become independent learners.

These skills are developed through play, group activities, classroom discussions, and everyday interactions.

Conflict Resolution

Conflicts between young children are viewed as natural learning opportunities.

When conflicts occur, teachers help children:

- Their bodies are calm.
- Identify their feelings.
- Listen to one another.
- Describe the problem.
- Think of possible solutions.
- Agree on a fair solution.
- Repair relationships when appropriate.

Adults remain nearby to guide the process while encouraging children to develop problem-solving skills independently.

Encouraging Independence

Developing independence is an important goal of the NM PreK Program.

Children are encouraged to:

- Make choices.
- Complete self-help routines.
- Care for classroom materials.
- Solve appropriate age problems.
- Participate in classroom responsibilities.
- Express their ideas.
- Build confidence through success.

Teachers provide support while gradually encouraging children to become more independent.

Children's Rights

Every child enrolled at Joy Learning Center has the right to:

- Feel physically and emotionally safe.
- Be treated with dignity and respect.
- Learn in an inclusive environment.
- Be accepted regardless of culture, language, ability, race, religion, or family structure.
- Express ideas and feelings respectfully.
- Receive developmentally appropriate instruction.
- Participate fully in classroom activities.
- Build positive relationships with peers and adults.
- Learn through play and exploration.
- Receive individualized support when needed.
- Having personal information kept confidential.

- Be protected from discrimination, neglect, abuse, intimidation, or humiliation.

Families' Rights

Families have the right to:

- Be treated with respect and professionalism.
- Receive information about their child's development.
- Participate in conferences and educational planning.
- Visit the program in accordance with center policies.
- Review their child's educational records as permitted by law.
- Receive timely communication regarding their child's progress.
- Share concerns and suggestions.
- Participate in family engagement activities.
- Receive information in a language they understand whenever possible.
- Collaborate in decisions affecting their child's education.

Families' Responsibilities

Families also play an important role in maintaining a successful partnership.

Families are expected to:

- Maintain updated emergency contact information.
- Inform the center of absences promptly.
- Arrive and pick up children on time.
- Read communications from the center.
- Participate in conferences whenever possible.
- Respect program policies.
- Treat staff, children, and other families respectfully.
- Notify the center of changes affecting their child.
- Support learning at home.
- Work collaboratively with teachers to support their child's development.

Challenging Behaviors

Young children sometimes display behaviors that communicate frustration, anxiety, fatigue, or unmet needs.

Teachers respond by:

- Remaining calm.

- Helping children identify emotions.
- Teaching replacement behaviors.
- Redirecting when appropriate.
- Providing additional support.
- Adjusting the environment when necessary.
- Collaborating with families.
- Developing individualized strategies if needed.

Behavior is viewed as an opportunity for learning rather than punishment.

Practices That Are Never Used

Joy Learning Center is committed to maintaining a safe and respectful learning environment.

The following practices are **never** permitted:

- Corporal punishment.
- Physical punishment of any kind.
- Humiliation.
- Verbal abuse.
- Threats.
- Ridicule.
- Food deprivation.
- Isolation as punishment.
- Harsh discipline.
- Public embarrassment.
- Physical restraint except as permitted by law to protect immediate safety.

All staff members receive ongoing training in positive guidance and child development.

Documentation and Family Communication

When significant behavioral concerns arise, teachers document objective observations and communicate with families promptly.

Documentation may include:

- Description of the behavior.
- Time and location.
- Possible triggers.
- Teacher responses.
- Child's response.
- Follow-up strategies.

Families are invited to participate in developing supportive plans whenever additional assistance is needed.

HEALTH, WELLNESS, AND SAFETY

Our Commitment to Children's Health and Safety

The health, safety, and well-being of every child are our highest priorities. Joy Learning Center is committed to maintaining a clean, healthy, and secure learning environment where children can learn, grow, and thrive.

All health and safety practices are implemented in accordance with the New Mexico Early Childhood Education and Care Department (ECECD), Child Care Licensing regulations, and applicable state and local health requirements.

Our staff receive ongoing training in health, safety, emergency preparedness, child supervision, safe sleep practices (when applicable), first aid, CPR, infection control, and child abuse prevention.

Daily Health Screening

Children are observed each day upon arrival to help ensure they are healthy enough to participate in classroom activities.

Staff may look for signs such as:

- Fever
- Persistent coughing
- Vomiting
- Diarrhea
- Rash of unknown origin
- Eye discharge
- Difficulty breathing
- Unusual fatigue
- Signs of contagious illness

If a child appears too ill to participate comfortably or may pose a health risk to others, families may be asked to keep the child at home or arrange for prompt pick-up.

Illness During the School Day

If a child becomes ill while attending the program:

- The child will be made comfortable and supervised by staff.
- Families will be contacted immediately.
- Emergency contacts may be called if parents cannot be reached.
- The child may remain separated from group activities until picked up when appropriate.
- Documentation will be completed when required.

Children should be picked up as soon as possible after notification.

Returning After Illness

Children may return when they:

- Have been fever-free for at least 24 hours without fever-reducing medication.
- Have not vomited or had diarrhea for at least 24 hours.
- Are able to participate comfortably in normal classroom activities.
- No longer present a risk of spreading contagious illness.
- Meet any additional requirements established by their healthcare provider or public health authorities.

Administration may request medical documentation when appropriate.

Medication Administration

Medication will only be administered when:

- A completed medication authorization form is on file.
- The medication is in its original container.
- Prescription medication includes the child's name and pharmacy label.
- Medication has not expired.
- Staff authorized to administer medication follow all required procedures.

Medication records are maintained for every dose administered.

Families must never leave medication in a child's backpack or personal belongings.

Allergies

Protecting children with allergies is a shared responsibility between families and staff.

Families must notify the center of any:

- Food allergies
- Medication allergies

- Environmental allergies
- Insect allergies
- Other medical conditions

If appropriate, an Individual Allergy Care Plan or Emergency Action Plan will be maintained.

Staff receive information regarding children's allergies while maintaining confidentiality.

Nutrition and Meals

Healthy nutrition supports children's learning and development.

Joy Learning Center provides meals and snacks that meet applicable nutritional guidelines.

Families will be informed of menus in advance whenever possible.

Food substitutions for documented medical conditions or allergies will be accommodated as appropriate.

Children are encouraged—but never forced—to try new foods.

Mealtimes are positive social learning experiences where children practice independence, communication, and healthy habits.

Water Availability

Fresh drinking water is available throughout the day.

Children are encouraged to drink water regularly, particularly during outdoor activities and warm weather.

Handwashing

Proper handwashing is one of the most effective ways to prevent the spread of illness.

Children and staff wash hands:

- Upon arrival.
- Before meals and snacks.
- After using the restroom.
- After diapering or toileting assistance.
- After outdoor play.
- After contact with bodily fluids.

- After coughing or sneezing.
- Whenever hands become visibly dirty.

Teachers also model healthy hygiene practices throughout the day.

Cleaning and Sanitizing

Joy Learning Center follows daily cleaning and sanitizing procedures to reduce the spread of illness. Regularly sanitized items include:

- Toys
- Tables
- Chairs
- Learning materials
- Restrooms
- Diapering areas
- Frequently touched surfaces
- Playground equipment

Cleaning products are stored securely and used according to manufacturer instructions.

Injury and Accident Procedures

Although every effort is made to maintain a safe environment, minor injuries may occasionally occur.

When an injury happens:

- Staff immediately assess the child.
- First aid is provided when appropriate.
- Families are notified according to the severity of the incident.
- An Accident Report is completed when required.
- Emergency medical services are contacted immediately if necessary.

All incidents are documented objectively and maintained in the child's file.

Emergency Medical Care

If a medical emergency occurs:

- Staff will call 911 immediately.

- Parents or guardians will be notified as soon as possible.
- Emergency contacts may be called if parents cannot be reached.
- Staff will remain with the child until emergency responders or authorized family members arrive.

Emergency medical care will never be delayed while attempting to contact families.

Immunization Requirements

Children must meet New Mexico immunization requirements unless a valid exemption is provided according to state law.

Families are responsible for keeping immunization records current.

Administration will notify families when updated records are required.

Safe Supervision

Children are always supervised.

Teachers maintain active supervision by:

- Positioning themselves strategically.
- Scanning the environment continuously.
- Counting children frequently.
- Anticipating potential hazards.
- Engaging with children.
- Monitoring all indoor and outdoor learning areas.

No child is ever left unattended.

Child Abuse and Neglect Reporting

All Joy Learning Center staff are mandated reporters under New Mexico law.

If staff have reasonable suspicion that a child may be experiencing abuse or neglect, they are legally required to report those concerns to the appropriate authorities.

Reports are made in good faith, confidentially, and in accordance with state law.

Families understand that staff members are legally obligated to fulfill this responsibility.

Health Records

Each child's confidential health file includes, when applicable:

- Emergency contacts
- Immunization records
- Health history
- Allergy information
- Medication authorizations
- Medical Action Plans
- Accident reports
- Incident documentation

Health information is maintained securely and shared only with authorized individuals.

Our Commitment

At Joy Learning Center, health and safety are integrated into every part of the school day. From arrival to dismissal, our staff work together to create an environment where children are protected, nurtured, and encouraged to develop healthy habits that support lifelong well-being.

We believe that strong partnerships with families, consistent health practices, and a proactive approach to safety allow every child to learn with confidence in a secure and caring environment.

ENROLLMENT, ATTENDANCE, AND DAILY PROCEDURES

Enrollment

The Joy Learning Center Community-Based New Mexico PreK Program is open to children who meet the eligibility requirements established by the New Mexico Early Childhood Education and Care Department (ECECD).

Age Eligibility

Children enrolled in the program must meet the following age requirements:

- **NM PreK:** Children must be **four (4) years old on or before September 1** of the current school year.

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- **Early PreK:** Children must be **three (3) years old on or before September 1** of the current school year.

Enrollment is based on eligibility requirements and available space.

Before a child may begin attending the program, families must complete the enrollment process and submit all required documentation.

Required enrollment documents may include:

- Completed Enrollment Application
- **Child's Birth Certificate**
- Emergency Contact Information
- Current Immunization Records
- Current **Medical Examination**
- Current **Dental Examination**
- Health Information
- Developmental Screening Consent Forms
- Permission Forms
- Parent Handbook Acknowledgment
- Custody Documents (if applicable)
- Medication Authorization Forms (if applicable)

Enrollment will not be considered complete until all required documents have been received and approved.

Equal Opportunity

Joy Learning Center welcomes all eligible children without discrimination based on:

- Race
- Color
- National origin
- Ethnicity
- Religion
- Disability
- Sex
- Gender identity
- Family structure
- Primary language

We are committed to maintaining an inclusive educational environment where every child is respected and valued.

Attendance

Regular attendance is one of the strongest predictors of school success.

Children benefit from consistent participation because daily attendance supports:

- Academic growth
- Social-emotional development
- Strong peer relationships
- Classroom routines
- School readiness
- Confidence and independence

Families are encouraged to establish consistent daily routines that support regular attendance.

Reporting Absences

If a child is absent, families should notify the center as soon as possible.

When reporting an absence, families are encouraged to provide:

- Child's name
- Reason for absence
- Expected return date, if known

Prompt communication helps staff maintain accurate attendance records and ensure children's well-being.

Extended Absences

If a child is absent for an extended period due to illness, family emergency, or other circumstances, families should communicate with the Director as soon as possible.

The program will work collaboratively with families whenever possible to support continued enrollment while following ECECD attendance requirements.

Extended Absence and Withdrawal

If a child is absent for **10 consecutive program days** and the family has not notified the center or does not respond to phone calls, text messages, emails, or other communication attempts, Joy Learning Center will consider the child voluntarily withdrawn from the program.

Before withdrawing a child, the center will make reasonable efforts to contact the family using the emergency contact information on file.

If no response is received after these documented communication attempts, the child's enrollment may be terminated, and the space may be offered to another eligible child.

Families who wish to re-enroll their child must complete the enrollment process again, and placement will depend on program availability.

Arrival Procedures

A successful school day begins with a safe and organized arrival.

Upon arrival:

- A parent or authorized adult must escort the child into the building.
- Children may not be dropped off unattended.
- Staff will greet each child and assist with the transition into the classroom.
- Families should communicate important information regarding the child's health, emotional well-being, or daily routine.

Children should arrive ready to participate in the day's learning activities.

Daily Sign-In and Sign-Out

For the safety of every child, all children must be signed in and signed out each day by an authorized adult using the center's approved attendance system.

Attendance records are maintained as required by licensing regulations and are considered official program records.

Authorized Pick-Up

Children will only be released to:

- Parents or legal guardians.
- Individuals listed on the child's Emergency Contact Form.

- Individuals are authorized in writing by the parent or legal guardian.

Staff may request valid photo identification before releasing a child.

If identification cannot be verified, the child will not be released until authorization has been confirmed.

Unauthorized Pick-Up

The safety of children is our highest priority.

If an unauthorized individual attempts to pick up a child:

- Staff will politely explain that authorization is required.
- The parent or legal guardian will be contacted immediately.
- The child will remain under staff supervision.
- Documentation will be completed when appropriate.

Under no circumstances will a child be released to an unauthorized individual.

Custody Orders

Joy Learning Center respects all legally binding custody agreements.

If custody or visitation restrictions exist, families must provide a current court-issued custody order.

Staff cannot enforce verbal custody arrangements or informal agreements.

Unless official legal documentation is on file, both parents generally have equal access to their child as permitted by law.

Families are responsible for informing the center of any updates to custody arrangements.

Late Pick-Up

Children should be picked up promptly at the scheduled dismissal time.

If an emergency is delayed, families should notify the center as soon as possible.

Repeated late pick-ups may result in additional fees, conferences with administration, or other actions consistent with center policies.

Staff remain with children until they are safely released to an authorized adult.

Release of Children

Children will never be released to:

- Individuals who are not authorized.
- Individuals who appear to be under the influence of alcohol or drugs.
- Minors who are not specifically authorized according to center policy.

If staff believe releasing a child may place the child at risk, appropriate steps will be taken to ensure the child's safety, including contacting emergency contacts or law enforcement if necessary.

Open Door Policy

Joy Learning Center values family involvement and maintains an Open Door Policy.

Families are welcome to visit the program during operating hours while respecting classroom routines, children's learning, and the privacy of other families.

To maintain a safe and productive environment:

- All visitors must check in with the office upon arrival.
- Visitors may be asked to present identification.
- Classroom visits should minimize disruption to instruction.
- Photography or video recording of other children is prohibited without written authorization.
- Confidential information regarding other children or families will never be shared.

This policy reflects our commitment to transparency while protecting the safety and privacy of everyone in our program.

Communication Between Home and School

Strong communication strengthens children's success.

Joy Learning Center communicates with families through:

- Daily conversations
- Parent communication applications

- Emails
- Phone calls
- Newsletters
- Family conferences
- Written notices
- Program events

Families are encouraged to contact teachers or administration whenever questions or concerns arise.

Updating Family Information

Families are responsible for notifying the center immediately if there are changes to:

- Home address
- Telephone numbers
- Emergency contacts
- Employment information
- Medical information
- Custody arrangements
- Authorized pick-up persons

Accurate records allow staff to respond quickly during emergencies.

Withdrawal from the Program

If a family chooses to withdraw their child from the program, written notice should be provided to the Director whenever possible.

The center may request an exit conference to discuss the child's transition and provide recommendations or records as appropriate.

Our Commitment

Joy Learning Center believes that clear procedures create a safe, organized, and welcoming environment for children and families. By working together and maintaining open communication, we ensure that each child begins and ends every school day in a secure, respectful, and supportive manner.

We value the trust families place in us and are committed to protecting every child's safety while fostering strong partnerships built on communication, consistency, and mutual respect.

EMERGENCY PREPAREDNESS AND SAFETY PROCEDURES

Our Commitment to Emergency Preparedness

The safety of children, families, staff, and visitors is our highest priority. Joy Learning Center maintains a comprehensive Emergency Preparedness Plan designed to protect everyone in the event of an emergency.

Our staff receive ongoing training and participate in regular emergency drills to ensure they are prepared to respond quickly, calmly, and effectively.

Emergency procedures are reviewed throughout the year and updated as necessary to comply with New Mexico licensing regulations and best practices.

Emergency Preparedness Plan

Joy Learning Center maintains written emergency procedures for situations including, but not limited to:

- Fire
- Medical emergencies
- Severe weather
- Power outages
- Water outages
- Gas leaks
- Hazardous material incidents
- Lockdown situations
- Shelter-in-place events
- Missing or lost child
- Unauthorized individuals on campus
- Community emergencies
- Natural disasters

Emergency information is readily available to all staff members.

Emergency Contact Information

Families are responsible for always keeping emergency contact information current.

Each child must have:

- Parent or guardian contact information
- At least two emergency contacts
- Medical information
- Authorized pick-up individuals
- Healthcare provider information, when applicable

If emergency contact information changes, families must notify the center immediately.

Emergency Medical Response

If a serious medical emergency occurs:

- Staff will immediately assess the situation.
- Emergency Medical Services (911) will be contacted without delay.
- Parents or guardians will be notified as soon as possible.
- Emergency contacts may be contacted if parents cannot be reached.
- Staff will remain with the child until emergency personnel, or an authorized adult assumes responsibility.

The child's health and safety will always be the priority.

Fire Drills

Fire drills are conducted regularly throughout the year in accordance with New Mexico licensing regulations.

During a fire drill:

- Children are calmly escorted from the building.
- Attendance is verified immediately.
- Staff supervise children continuously.
- No one re-enters the building until it is safe to do so.

Teachers use these drills as opportunities to help children become familiar with emergency routines in a calm and reassuring manner.

Evacuation Procedures

If the building must be evacuated due to an emergency:

- Staff will safely escort children to the designated evacuation site.
- Attendance will be verified immediately.
- Emergency supplies will accompany each classroom whenever possible.

- Families will receive instructions regarding reunification procedures.

Children remain under staff supervision until they are released to an authorized adult.

Shelter-in-Place Procedures

Certain emergencies may require children and staff to remain safely inside the building.

Examples include:

- Severe weather
- Hazardous environmental conditions
- Community safety concerns
- Air quality emergencies

During shelter-in-place situations:

- Exterior doors remain secure.
- Children continue participating in calm classroom activities whenever appropriate.
- Staff monitor emergency updates.
- Families are informed as information becomes available.

Lockdown Procedures

In the event of a situation that may threaten the safety of individuals inside or near the building, Joy Learning Center may initiate a lockdown.

During a lockdown:

- Classroom doors are secure.
- Children remain with staff.
- Lights may be turned off when appropriate.
- Staff maintain a calm environment.
- Attendance is verified.
- No one enters or exits until authorized by emergency personnel.

Staff receive regular training on lockdown procedures.

Severe Weather

New Mexico weather conditions can change rapidly.

The center continuously monitors weather conditions and takes appropriate action to protect children and staff.

Families are encouraged to remain available by telephone during severe weather events.

Outdoor activities may be modified or canceled when weather conditions create safety concerns.

Inclement Weather Policy

Joy Learning Center is a **Community-Based New Mexico PreK Program** and is **not operated by Albuquerque Public Schools (APS)**.

However, when Albuquerque Public Schools announce delays, early dismissals, or closures due to severe weather or hazardous road conditions, Joy Learning Center will generally follow the same schedule whenever it is determined to be in the best interest of children, families, and staff.

If circumstances require a different decision, families will be notified as early as possible through the center's communication system.

Power or Utility Outages

If the center experiences:

- Power failure
- Water interruption
- Heating failure
- Air conditioning failure
- Gas interruption

Administration will evaluate whether the building can continue operating safely.

If conditions cannot be maintained safely, families will be contacted to pick up their children.

Missing or Lost Child Procedures

Although every precaution is taken to prevent this situation, Joy Learning Center maintains specific procedures should a child become separated from the group.

Staff will immediately:

- Verify attendance.
- Search for the immediate area.
- Notify administration.
- Contact emergency services when appropriate.
- Notify the child's family.
- Document the incident.
- Review procedures to prevent future occurrences.

Child supervision practices are designed to minimize the possibility of this type of event.

Unauthorized Individuals

If an unfamiliar or unauthorized person enters the facility:

- Staff will immediately notify administration.
- Identification may be requested.
- Visitors must remain in authorized areas.
- Law enforcement will be contacted when necessary.

Children will remain under close supervision until the situation has been resolved.

Family Reunification

If children must be relocated during an emergency:

- Families will receive instructions regarding the reunification location.
- Only authorized individuals listed in the child's records may pick up the child.
- Photo identification may be required.
- Staff will document each child's release.

Our goal is to reunite children with their families safely and efficiently.

Communication During Emergencies

Joy Learning Center will communicate with families using available methods such as:

- Parent communication application
- Phone calls
- Text messages
- Email
- Written notices
- Recorded voicemail messages, when applicable

Families are encouraged to keep contact information current to ensure timely communication during emergencies.

Emergency Supplies

The center maintains emergency supplies that may include:

- First aid kits
- Drinking water
- Non-perishable food
- Flashlights
- Batteries
- Emergency contact information
- Basic sanitation supplies
- Classroom attendance records
- Comfort items for children

Emergency supplies are reviewed and replenished regularly.

Emotional Support After Emergencies

Following a stressful event, teachers provide reassurance and emotional support appropriate to each child's developmental level.

Families will be informed of significant events and encouraged to communicate any concerns regarding their child's emotional well-being.

If appropriate, additional community resources may be recommended.

Our Commitment

At Joy Learning Center, emergency preparedness is more than following procedures—it is part of our commitment to protecting every child entrusted to our care. Through planning, training, communication, and teamwork, we strive to provide a safe environment where children can continue to learn, and families can feel confident that their children are protected.

CONFIDENTIALITY, PROFESSIONAL ETHICS, TECHNOLOGY, AND FAMILY PRIVACY

Our Commitment to Privacy

At Joy Learning Center, we understand that families entrust us with their children's personal information, educational records, health information, and daily care. We are committed to protecting this information with the highest level of confidentiality, professionalism, and respect.

All staff members are expected to maintain strict confidentiality regarding every child and family enrolled in our program.

Information is shared only when authorized by the parent or guardian, required by law, or necessary to protect the health and safety of a child.

Confidentiality of Children's Records

Each child has a confidential educational and enrollment record maintained by the center.

These records may include:

- Enrollment documents
- Emergency contact information
- Attendance records
- Health records
- Immunization records
- Developmental screenings
- Assessment information
- Individual learning documentation
- Incident and accident reports
- Medication records
- Parent communication records

Records are maintained securely and are accessible only to authorized personnel.

Access to Records

Parents and legal guardians have the right to review their child's records in accordance with applicable laws and center procedures.

To protect confidentiality:

- Appointments may be scheduled for record review.
- Records concerning other children will never be shared.
- Copies may be provided when appropriate.
- Certain records may require written requests.

Confidential Conversations

Teachers and administrators respect the privacy of every family.

Discussions regarding:

- Child development
- Behavior
- Assessments
- Health
- Family concerns
- Individualized services

are conducted privately and never in the presence of other families or children whenever possible.

Staff Confidentiality

Employees may not discuss confidential information regarding children or families outside their professional responsibilities.

This includes conversations:

- Inside the classroom
- Hallways
- Parking areas
- Community settings
- Social gatherings
- Online platforms
- Social media

Confidentiality continues even after employment ends.

Photography and Video Policy

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Joy Learning Center enjoys documenting children's learning experiences through photographs and videos.

Photographs may be used for:

- Classroom documentation
- Children's portfolios
- Family communication
- Bulletin boards
- Educational displays

No child's image will be used for promotional or public purposes without written parent or guardian authorization.

Families may decline permission for public use of photographs at any time.

Family Photography

To protect the privacy of all children:

Families are asked not to photograph or record other children during school events unless permission has been granted by the families involved.

This policy helps protect every child's privacy while allowing families to enjoy special events.

Security Camera Policy

Joy Learning Center utilizes security cameras in designated common areas to help promote the safety and security of children, staff, and visitors.

Security cameras are intended to:

- Support child safety.
- Assist with incident review.
- Protect program property.
- Enhance building security.

Security camera recordings remain the property of Joy Learning Center.

Video recordings are confidential and are not routinely released to families.

Recordings may only be reviewed by authorized personnel or released when required by law or requested by authorized governmental agencies.

The presence of security cameras does not replace active supervision by staff.

Social Media Policy

Joy Learning Center values positive communication while protecting the privacy of children and families.

Staff members may not:

- Post photographs of enrolled children on personal social media accounts.
- Share confidential information.
- Discuss families online.
- Identify children without authorization.
- Publish classroom information without administrative approval.

Official program social media accounts may share photographs only when written family authorization has been provided.

Electronic Communication

Communication between families and the center may occur through approved methods such as:

- Parent communication applications
- Email
- Telephone
- Written notices
- Text messaging, when appropriate

Staff are expected to communicate professionally, respectfully, and in a timely manner.

Electronic communication becomes part of the child's educational record when appropriate.

Artificial Intelligence (AI) and Digital Tools

Joy Learning Center may utilize secure digital tools to assist with administrative tasks, educational planning, and family communication.

Any technology used by the program will support, but never replace, the professional judgment of qualified educators.

Personally identifiable information about children or families will not be entered into public artificial intelligence platforms unless permitted by law, authorized by the family when applicable, and approved by program administration.

The program is committed to using technology responsibly while protecting children's privacy.

Electronic Devices

Children's use of electronic devices within the classroom is limited and intentional.

Technology may be used to:

- Support educational experiences.
- Enhance learning.
- Document children's progress.
- Facilitate communication with families.

Screen time is never used as a substitute for active learning, outdoor play, social interaction, or teacher-child engagement.

Personal Cell Phones

To ensure children's safety and active supervision:

Staff members are expected to keep personal cell phone use to a minimum during working hours.

Personal devices should never interfere with:

- Active supervision
- Child interactions
- Classroom instruction
- Emergency response responsibilities

Only authorized devices may be used for classroom documentation or family communication.

Visitor Confidentiality

Visitors, volunteers, therapists, student interns, and contractors who enter the program are expected to respect the confidentiality of all children and families.

Confidential information observed during visits may not be shared with others.

Professional Ethics

Joy Learning Center employees are committed to maintaining the highest standards of professional conduct.

Staff members are expected to:

- Treat every child with dignity and respect.
- Build positive relationships with families.
- Maintain confidentiality.
- Demonstrate honesty and integrity.
- Report concerns appropriately.
- Follow licensing regulations and program policies.
- Participate in ongoing professional development.
- Model respectful communication.

Professional ethics guide every interaction within our learning community.

Mandatory Reporting Responsibilities

All employees are mandated reporters under New Mexico law.

If staff have reasonable cause to suspect abuse or neglect, they are legally required to report those concerns to the appropriate authorities.

Reports are made:

- In good faith.
- Promptly.
- Confidentially.
- According to state law.

The safety and well-being of children always take precedence.

Record Retention

Program records are maintained according to applicable licensing requirements and state record retention policies.

When records are no longer required, they are securely destroyed to protect confidential information.

Data Security

Joy Learning Center utilizes reasonable administrative, physical, and technological safeguards to protect confidential information from unauthorized access, disclosure, alteration, or loss.

Only authorized personnel may access confidential program information.

Staff receive guidance regarding confidentiality and secure handling of records.

Our Commitment

At Joy Learning Center, protecting children's privacy is a responsibility we take seriously. Families deserve to know that the personal information they share with us is treated with care, respect, and professionalism.

We are committed to maintaining the highest ethical standards while using technology responsibly, safeguarding confidential information, and fostering a culture of trust between families, educators, and the community.

FAMILY COMMUNICATION, CONCERNS, AND GRIEVANCE PROCEDURES

Our Commitment to Open Communication

Joy Learning Center believes that strong partnerships are built through honest, respectful, and timely communication.

We encourage families to ask questions, share ideas, celebrate successes, and discuss concerns whenever they arise. Open communication helps us provide the highest quality educational experience for every child.

Our goal is always to resolve concerns collaboratively, professionally, and respectfully.

Family Communication

Communication between home and school is an ongoing partnership.

Families may communicate with the program through:

- Daily conversations
- Parent communication applications
- Telephone
- Email
- Scheduled conferences
- Family meetings
- Written correspondence
- Newsletters
- Classroom events

Families are encouraged to contact teachers whenever they have questions regarding their child's learning or well-being.

Respectful Communication

Joy Learning Center is committed to maintaining a respectful learning environment for children, families, staff, and visitors.

We ask that all interactions be conducted with:

- Courtesy
- Respect
- Professionalism
- Patience
- Honesty
- Collaboration

The center does not tolerate threatening, abusive, discriminatory, intimidating, or aggressive behavior toward children, families, staff members, or visitors.

Addressing Concerns

Questions and concerns are best resolved as early as possible.

Families are encouraged to follow these steps:

Step 1 – Speak with the Classroom Teacher

Many concerns can be resolved through open communication with the child's teacher.

Teachers are committed to listening carefully, answering questions, and working collaboratively with families.

Step 2 – Meet with the Director

If the concern cannot be resolved at the classroom level, families may request a meeting with the Director.

The Director will:

- Listen carefully.
- Review available information.
- Meet with appropriate staff members.

- Work collaboratively toward a fair resolution.
- Follow applicable licensing requirements when necessary.

Step 3 – Written Concern

If additional review is necessary, families may submit a written statement describing:

- The concern.
- Relevant dates.
- Individuals involved.
- Desired resolution.

The Director will acknowledge receipt of the concern and review it promptly.

Investigation Process

When concerns require further review, Joy Learning Center may:

- Interview staff members.
- Review program documentation.
- Examine attendance or classroom records.
- Review incident reports.
- Review security camera footage when available and appropriate.
- Consult licensing requirements.
- Consult outside agencies when legally required.

Investigations are conducted fairly, objectively, and confidentially.

Confidentiality During Investigations

To protect everyone involved:

- Confidential information cannot be shared.
- Personnel matters remain confidential.
- Information regarding other children cannot be disclosed.
- Families may receive updates regarding the status of their own concern whenever appropriate.

Protecting privacy is an essential part of maintaining trust.

Child Safety Concerns

If a concern involves the health, safety, or welfare of a child:

- Immediate action will be taken.
- Appropriate authorities will be notified when required by law.
- Families will be informed as permitted by law.
- The center will cooperate fully with all investigations conducted by authorized agencies.

The safety of children always takes priority.

Mandatory Reporting

As mandated reporters, Joy Learning Center employees are legally required to report suspected abuse or neglect.

Staff members cannot investigate allegations independently before making the required report.

Reports are made in good faith and according to New Mexico law.

Programming Improvement

Joy Learning Center views family feedback as an opportunity for continuous improvement.

Suggestions may be shared regarding:

- Curriculum
- Communication
- Family engagement
- Classroom environment
- Health and safety
- Program operations
- School events

Constructive feedback helps strengthen our program.

Family Surveys

Families may be invited to participate in confidential surveys throughout the school year.

Survey topics may include:

- Overall satisfaction
- Communication
- Teacher relationships

- Curriculum
- Family engagement
- Health and safety
- Program quality

Survey results are reviewed by administration to support ongoing program improvement.

Conflict Resolution

When disagreements occur, Joy Learning Center encourages respectful problem-solving.

Whenever possible, conflicts are resolved through:

- Active listening
- Open communication
- Mutual respect
- Collaboration
- Shared problem-solving

The center believes that maintaining positive relationships benefits children, families, and staff alike.

Non-Retaliation

Families may express concerns or ask questions without fear of retaliation.

Joy Learning Center values honest communication and is committed to addressing concerns fairly and professionally.

Likewise, staff members are expected to maintain respectful relationships with every family regardless of differences of opinion.

Licensing Information

Families have the right to contact the New Mexico Early Childhood Education and Care Department (ECECD) Child Care Licensing Bureau if they have concerns regarding licensing compliance.

Upon request, the center will provide current contact information for the appropriate licensing office.

Community Partnerships

PARENT HANDBOOK
PREK NEW MEXICO
JOY LEARNING CENTER

Joy Learning Center values collaboration with community agencies that support children and families.

These partnerships may include:

- New Mexico ECECD
- Early Intervention Programs
- Public School Districts
- Health Care Providers
- Mental Health Professionals
- Family Support Agencies
- Community Organizations

Working together strengthens services for children and families.

Our Commitment

Every question, concern, or suggestion is important to us. Joy Learning Center is committed to listening carefully, responding respectfully, and working collaboratively with families to ensure that every child receives the highest quality care and education.

FAMILY PARTNERSHIP AGREEMENT

Program Changes

Joy Learning Center reserves the right to modify policies, procedures, schedules, or program operations as necessary to comply with licensing regulations, ECECD requirements, health and safety guidance, or program needs. Families will be notified of significant changes.

Our Shared Commitment

The success of every child depends on a strong partnership between families and Joy Learning Center. We ask all families to work together with staff to provide a safe, respectful, and positive learning environment.

Families Agree To:

- Support regular attendance.
- Arrive and pick up children on time.
- Keep emergency information current.
- Read program communications.
- Participate in conferences whenever possible.
- Treat staff, children, and other families with respect.
- Follow all program policies.

Joy Learning Center Agrees To:

- Provide a safe and nurturing learning environment.

PARENT HANDBOOK
PREK NEW MEXICO
JOY LEARNING CENTER

- Respect every child and family.
- Maintain open communication.
- Protect confidential information.
- Support each child's learning and development.
- Partner with families in educational planning.

Parent Handbook Acknowledgment

I acknowledge that I have received the **Joy Learning Center Community-Based New Mexico PreK Parent Handbook**. I understand that it is my responsibility to read and follow the policies described in this handbook.

I understand that program policies may be updated when necessary, and families will be notified of significant changes.

Child's Name: _____

Parent/Guardian Name: _____

Date: _____

Director's Signature: _____

Date: _____

