

# Agawam School Age Childcare

## **Parent Handbook**

2009-2010 School Year

# Thank you for choosing Agawam School Age Childcare!

## **ASAC Statement of Purpose**

We understand the importance of a quality school age childcare setting and have worked very hard to develop a program of which you can be proud. We offer both before and after school programs for children that provide reliable care for working parents. We are located in the Middle School, Phelps, Clark, Robinson and Granger Schools. We will emphasize the process of learning through active play and facilitation. Our program is geared to meet the educational, social, emotional and physical needs of the children enrolled without regard to age, sex, race, color, religion, national origin, political beliefs, marital status, sexual orientation, or physical or mental ability.

## **ASAC Goals & Objectives**

1. Providing families with a secure feeling that their children are participating in a structured and safe environment in which children can build positive social relationships and develop higher levels of self-esteem.
2. Helping children develop to their fullest potential by focusing on the whole child, physically, emotionally, socially and academically.
3. Providing opportunities for children to express emotions appropriately and improve problem-solving skills.
4. Helping children to develop a better understanding of individual differences while supporting an awareness of the rights of others.
5. Providing a wide range of supervised activities to help students achieve academic success and develop creative expression in a positive environment.

## **ASAC Program Philosophy**

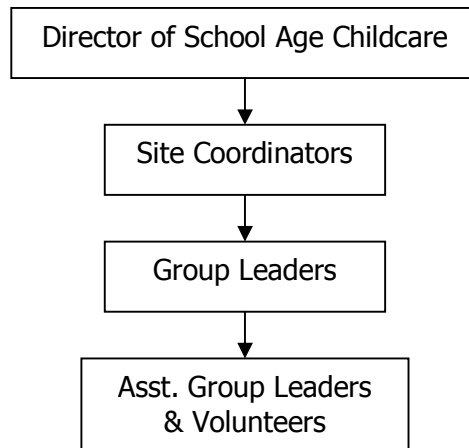
Agawam School Age Childcare is licensed by the Department of Early Education and Care (EEC, the Massachusetts licensing agency) and follows all EEC regulations. Our program was developed for school-aged children in grades K-6 and our staff is committed to providing them with a nurturing, constructive and happy environment. Enrolling your child in this program will prevent immature decision-making and also prevent behaviors that can occur when children go home to an empty house.

Children are our number one priority and are the reason we strive to meet all of their educational, physical and emotional needs. Our staff greets all students daily and ensures that each child is made to feel as an important part of the group. Children are given individual attention whenever possible, which we feel, is so crucial before and after a busy school day. Safety is a big concern and our goal is to improve socialization skills while building children's self-esteem.

We encourage and guide children to become independent thinkers and offer a wide variety of small and large group activities to support child development. We offer homework assistance to students so families do not have to focus most of their quality time on school assignments in the evening. We also provide children with free time so that they can unwind at the end of their structured school day.

The program will communicate with families frequently by the use of daily contact at arrival and dismissal times, phone calls when appropriate, and newsletters. If at any time you have a question, concern, or suggestion you are encouraged to share them with the staff. Please contact the Site Coordinator or the Director and remember that your input is always welcome.

## School Age Childcare Organizational Charts



### Hours of Operation

Our Before School Program offers early morning childcare for children in grades K-6. The program hours are from **7:00 a.m. until the start of the school day**. Parents will drop off all Phelps, Granger, Clark, Robinson & Middle School students at their appropriate locations.

Our After School Program offers childcare from the end of the school day until parents pick up the students in the late afternoon; the program **closes at 6:00 p.m.**

During **vacation weeks** the program will offer full day childcare. It will be open from **7 a.m. until 6:00 p.m.** with exception to holidays when ASAC is closed. The program will open earlier, as soon as schools dismiss, on **scheduled** early release days such as parent conference days or professional development days. (Additional fees apply) Parents need to sign up their child in advance to secure a placement for any additional hours. We staff the program according to the number of children registered in advance. If you do not sign your child up by the due date your slot is not guaranteed.

### Daily Schedule

(Subject to change slightly by location)

#### Before School

##### 7:00 AM - Start of school day

Program opens, breakfast is available, children are greeted and select free choice activities, which may include but are not limited to books, puzzles, coloring, manipulatives, & gross motor games

#### After School

##### 3:15-3:30 PM

Arrival, sign in, prepare for afternoon snack, washing & toileting

##### 3:30-4:15 PM

Group meeting to discuss day & available choices; Homework, Quiet Activities, Books, Board Games, Legos, Art, etc.

##### 4:15-5:00 PM

Outdoor time, large motor activities that are both adult directed & child directed

##### 5:00-6:00 PM

Free choice time, planned activities (vary daily; art, cooperative games, learning center) games & activities are always available in the room, preparation for departure by 6 PM

## Meal Plan

ASAC will provide students with a breakfast snack in the morning and a snack in the afternoon. During school vacation week or on a half day parents are required to provide children with lunches from home. Healthy foods we suggest are tuna, egg salad, vegetables & dip, yogurt, fruit, turkey or ham sandwiches, or cheese and crackers.

## ASAC Enrollment

Enrollment is open to all Agawam Public School students in grades K-6. Families are welcome to visit the program & meet the staff before a child is enrolled. There is an annual non-refundable registration fee of \$50 per child. This fee along with your child's first and last weeks tuition is due upon registration and is non-refundable for early withdrawal. The number of slots is determined by EEC licensing regulations and by available staff. Registration will be taken on a first come first serve basis. A waiting list will be kept if the program becomes full.

## ASAC Fees

Payments for the program are due on a weekly or a monthly basis. Checks and money orders are the only types of payment accepted; please no cash. Checks are made payable to the Agawam Public Schools. The fees listed below are required to be paid in full the **Thursday before the week of service**. A cumulative service charge of \$5/day per child will be added to the outstanding balance for all payments received after 6:00 p.m. on Thursday. Payments that are two weeks late will result in possible termination of enrollment from the program. Families will be responsible for any checks returned due to insufficient funds according to MA General Laws, Arts 1989 (\$25 plus accrued interest). Weekly schedules need to remain consistent or charges are assessed according to the drop-in rates.

Days Per Week	Before School Rates	After School Rates	Before & After School Rates
5 Days	\$46	\$73	\$109
4 Days	\$41	\$66	\$102
3 Days	\$37	\$55	\$86
2 Days	\$27	\$46	\$68

### Drop in Charges: For children not regularly scheduled

We do provide drop-in service if space and additional staff are available. Children must be pre-registered prior to attending the program. Charges are based on days enrolled as indicated in the tuition rates listed below plus the registration fee.

Before School Rate	\$17 per day
After School Rate	\$25 per day

### School Vacation Rates: Vacation weeks excluding holidays

During School vacation weeks, the program is open from 7 a.m. until 6 p.m. Children may attend on their regularly scheduled days or enroll for additional days if space is available. Enroll for a full day at a charge of \$36 per day. **Regular weekly fees apply if your child will not be attending on these weeks.** No vacation credit will be given for children who do not attend during vacation weeks. Parents provide a lunch for their children during vacation weeks. A minimum of twelve children is required to run the program during these weeks. Depending on enrollment we may have 1 location open and all children together during vacation weeks. If you sign your child up to attend during vacation weeks you are required to pay for the service regardless of attendance.

**Scheduled Early Release Days:**

If your child attends the program on a scheduled early release day an additional charge of \$8 applies to your weekly rate. Parents will send children to school with their lunches on half days. Notices will be provided to families regarding fees and hours when there is a scheduled change and parents need to sign their child up for these days in advance.

**Holidays:**

Other than school vacation weeks we will be closed when the public schools close for holidays. Holidays have been taken into consideration in the overall tuition rates, and full tuition is due for weeks in which holidays occur. Substitutions in schedules cannot be made for holidays.

**Illness & Other Absences:**

Because of staff scheduling requirements, credit or refunds are not given for illness or other absences unless there are extenuating circumstances, which are first approved by Administration. Contracted scheduled time must be paid even if your child is absent.

**Emergency Weather Conditions:**

ASAC will be closed on snow days. When school is delayed the morning session is cancelled. This is to ensure that parking lots are cleared properly so it is safe for students and staff to enter school. When after school programs are cancelled we will not hold the afternoon session. A credit will be calculated towards your child's last two weeks in the program for these days. Parents need to listen to the radio/television for delays and cancellations when dangerous conditions occur. Arrangements need to be made in advance with the school office to ensure children are sent home correctly.

**Sibling Discount:**

Families receive 10% off the tuition of the second child when two or more children are enrolled.

**Tax Credits:**

Tuition payments to Agawam Public Schools qualify for a federal tax credit for many families. After January 1<sup>st</sup> and upon written request to the Director we will furnish you with a tax statement for the previous year.

**Withdrawal:**

A 2-week written notice is required for withdrawal for any reason. Full tuition is due for this period, and your security deposit will be a credit towards the fee of your child's last week.

**Program/Schedule Changes**

We try to accommodate requests for additional hours whenever possible for children with regular weekly schedules, but only with prior arrangements and only if staff and space are available.

**Additional time is billed at the applicable daily rate.** Different hours may not be substituted for those previously scheduled. Permanent changes in a child's regular schedule may be made with two-week prior written notice provided space is available.

**Drop off & Pick Up Policy**

The following policies are adhered to in order to ensure safety of enrolled children in the program.

- Families must supply in writing at the time of registration a list of the individuals authorized to pick up their child.
- In the event that someone not on the authorized list will be picking a child up a written note to the Site Coordinator is required. In the event of an emergency an exception can be made with permission granted by telephone authorization.

- Authorized adults need to come into the building to pick up or drop off a child and children need to be signed in or out of the program.
- If a staff member does not recognize an authorized pick up person staff will request a picture ID that will be compared to the list of contacts in the child's file. If the name is not on the list the parents will be contacted before a child is released. If a parent cannot be reached the child cannot be released.
- If you are picking up your child from the playground it is your responsibility to sign your child out before leaving the school.

### **Late Pick Up Penalty:**

If a child is left past 6:00 p.m. a penalty of \$10 per 15 minutes (or any part thereof) will be charged. If you know you will be late please call and make the site coordinator aware of that so other pick up arrangements are not made with someone on your emergency contact list. The late charge will be assessed in any case. If your child is left at the program for more than hour after we closed and you have not contacted us we will call DSS or the Police Department.

## **Transportation**

All transportation will be provided by parents/guardians.

## **Parent Information Conferences & Involvement**

Parent involvement is essential in providing a program that is meaningful to both you and your child. We strongly encourage parental involvement and input. Staff will be made available to discuss any concerns that you have. Parents are welcome at anytime to view program activities. We communicate daily at arrival and departure times and through phone calls and letters. Any of our concerns will be brought to your attention immediately. We are always willing to discuss any aspect of the program with you.

### **Grievances:**

We encourage parents to discuss any concerns with their child's Group Leader or Site Coordinator. If at any time you have a problem and have not received a satisfactory solution from a Site Coordinator, please contact the Director. Individual meetings are encouraged to resolve any issues that may arise.

## **Reporting Abuse or Neglect**

All staff members are mandated reporters according to MA General Law C119, Section 51A. If a staff member has a reasonable suspicion of abuse or neglect of a child a report with Department of Social Services has to be filed. Reasonable suspicion means that after examining all the facts in a particular situation most people with similar experience and training would also suspect abuse. If and when this reasonable cause exists staff report this suspicion to the Director, who will then handle the actual reporting. Filing a report will get the child and family help and supportive services. After a verbal report is made to DSS a written report needs to be filed as well. Incidents that we question will be documented and placed in the child's file.

It is our commitment to protect all children from abuse or neglect. Any report of suspected abuse or neglect of a child while in our care would be immediately reported to DSS and EEC. A meeting will be held with the staff member in question to inform him/her of the filed report. The staff member will be immediately suspended from the program without pay pending the outcome of the DSS & EEC investigations. DSS has 10 days to conduct an investigation and ECC has 30 days. The staff member can be reinstated if DSS screens out the report.

## Healthcare

For a complete Healthcare Policy contact the Director. Because of the close proximity of the children at school, they should remain at home when ill. Any child who comes to the program ill will be sent home immediately. Children remain at home if the following conditions exist:

- Fever- temperature over 100 degrees the child will be excluded from school.
- Behavior- if a child looks or acts differently. Awake all night and crying, unusually tired, pale, lack of appetite, irritable or restless.
- Respiratory- breathing difficulty.
- Vomiting- the child will be excluded for 24 hours after incident.
- Diarrhea- or loose stools not associated with food or medication reactions.
- Unexplained rashes
- Complains of sore throat, headache, stomachache
- Persistent cough

The following communicable diseases require confirmation from a doctor that the child is no longer contagious:

- Chicken pox
- Impetigo
- Lice & Scabies
- Conjunctivitis
- Hepatitis
- Pin worms
- Strep Throat
- Ear Infections

A child who is excluded from any indoor or outdoor activity is not considered healthy enough to come to the program. If a child has been ill they must be symptom free for 24 hours before returning to the program.

## Procedures for Emergencies and Illnesses

### Transportation:

- In case of an emergency the Director or Site Coordinator will call an ambulance
- If necessary, a staff member trained in First Aid will administer first aid while waiting for the ambulance to arrive

### Notification of Parents:

- Director or Site Coordinator will call the parents
- Emergency telephone numbers and consent forms are kept on site

### When a Parent cannot be reached:

- The emergency contacts and the family physician will be called and the above procedure will be carried out.
- For minor injuries, a staff member will clean a cut with soap and water and continue with appropriate first aid treatment.

### Emergency Contingency Plan:

In the event of a fire, natural disaster or a situation necessitating evacuation of the building, staff members will walk the children to a safe location approved by the police department and parents will be notified by phone where to pick up their child. In case of power outage or loss of heat, parents will be notified to pick up their children, and the program will be closed.

## **Plan for Dispensing Medication**

### **Prescription Medication:**

- Prescription medication must be brought to school in its original container and include the child's name, name of medication, the dosage, and the number of times per the number of days the medication is to be administered. This prescription label will be written authorization of the physician.
- The program will not administer any medication contrary to the directions on the label unless so authorized by the physician.
- The parent must fill out the Authorization for Medication Form before the medication can be administered.

### **Non-Prescription Medication:**

- Non-Prescription medication will only be given with written consent of the child's physician. The program will accept a signed statement from the physician listing the medication(s), the dosage and criteria for its administration. This statement will be valid for one year from the date signed.
- Along with written consent of the physician, the program will also need written parental authorization. The parent must fill out the Authorization for Medication form, which allows the program staff to administer the non-prescription medication in accordance with the written order of the physician. The statement will be valid for one year from the date it was signed.
- The program will make every attempt to contact the parent prior to administering the non-prescription medication unless the child needs the medication urgently.

### **Topical Ointments & Sprays:**

- Topical ointment & sprays such as petroleum jelly, sunscreen, and bug spray, etc. will be administered to the child with written parental permission. The signed statement from the parent will be valid for one year and include a list of topical non-prescription medication.
- When topical ointments and sprays are applied to wounds, rashes, or broken skin the program will follow its written procedure for non-prescription medication which includes the written order of the physician which is valid for a year and Authorization for Medication form signed by the parent.

### **All Medications:**

- The parent at home needs to administer the first dose of medication in case of allergic reaction.
- All medications must be given directly to the staff directly by the parent.
- All medications will be stored out of reach of children.
- The site coordinator will be responsible for the administering of medication.
- The program will maintain a written record of the administration of any medication (excluding topical ointments & sprays applied to normal skin), which will include the child's name, the time, and date of each administration, the dosage and the name of the staff member administering the medication. This complete record will be part of the child's file.
- Any unused medication will be returned to the parent.

### **Procedures for Identifying & Protecting Children with Allergies:**

ASAC require parents to inform staff of any known allergies. We will post all children and their allergies for notification of all staff. Staff will be made aware of allergies to ensure that children are not exposed.

## **Records & Confidentiality**

In compliance with state regulations, a written record is maintained on each child. This written record includes such items as the enrollment form, medical health records, parental authorizations and consents, emergency telephone numbers, and any pertinent correspondence. These records are personal and confidential. They will not be released without written consent of the parent or

guardian. Parents/Guardians have access to their child's record and have the right to add information or comments to the record. Parents have the right to request the deletion or amendment of any information contained in the child's record. Parents will not be unreasonably charged for copies of children's records. Please be aware that EEC or DSS can at anytime request access to children's records. No materials will be removed from the program and confidentiality will be maintained. A written log is kept in each child's file listing anytime someone outside the program had access to a child's file. This log will include the name, date and person the information was released to.

### **Supportive Services & Referrals**

When a staff member suspects that a child is having a physical, social, emotional, or language development issue the following referral plan will be used.

- The child will be observed and documentation will be taken and staff will document their concerns.
- Conferences will be planned with the family of the child. The Director will be present. During which time the parents or the staff may decide to make a referral to the appropriate support service.
- The Director must have parental consent before making the referral.
- After the conference a written statement will be provided to the parent. It will include the reason for referral, summary of observations, and how the program will attempt to accommodate the child's needs. This will also be placed in the child's file with any other documentation to go along with the referral.

### **Behavior Management Plan**

The ASAC Staff strives to create an environment, which encourages children to behave in a socially acceptable way. Positive behavior is rewarded. Inappropriate behavior is discouraged through explanation, redirection to an appropriate activity, discussion among children or adults or removal from the activity that the child cannot manage in an appropriate way. Whenever possible, children participate in the development of rules which creates a feeling of ownership of the program and their day.

No child shall be subjected to abuse or neglect, cruel, unusual, severe or corporal punishment. No child shall be denied food, rest, or bathroom facilities; be punished for soiling or wetting clothes or not using the toilet; or punishment related to eating or not eating.

### **Termination & Suspension Policy**

If the teachers and staff cannot meet the needs of your child in a way to continue having a positive attitude in the program, he/she will be asked to find a more suitable setting with the help of the Director.

#### **Incident Reports:**

For serious behavior problems the staff will complete an Incident Report Form for the parent and a parent conference will be held to discuss the problem. If a student receives a second Incident Report he/she will be suspended from the program after parent notification. A third incident report results in immediate termination from the program. This policy is enforced to ensure the safety of the children and staff in the program.

#### **Reasons for Termination:**

- A child's consistent behavior that causes danger to him/herself as well to others in the room, such as excessive pushing, hitting, biting etc.
- Continuous non-payment of tuition bills

**Procedures for Determining Termination:**

- Keep specific documentation of the incidents and how the situations were handled.
- Having a formal conference with parents or guardians.
- Working together to solve the problem.
- Make a possible referral

When parents and staff attempt to resolve a problem and have applied all techniques and resources and it continues to occur, then the child will be terminated with a two-week notice. The staff will assist parents in preparing the child for termination in a way the child will understand.

**Reasons for Suspension:**

- Unable to meet the needs of the child through reasonable accommodations
- Immunizations and health records are not up to date
- Continuous failure to comply with policies

**Reasons for Determining Suspension:**

- Keep specific documentation of incidents and how the situations were handled.
- Phone and discuss problems with parent/guardian
- Work together on the problem
- Possible immediate pick-up from the program

When parents and staff try to resolve a problem and have applied all techniques and resources and it continues to occur, then the parent will be asked to pick up the child to leave the program early.

**Research and Experimentation**

ASAC does not participate in any research and experimentation projects.

**Policies & Tuition Changes**

Agawam Public Schools reserves the right to make changes to the above policies and tuition schedules with 30 days written notice.

**Department of Early Education and Care**

DEEC is our licensing authority and we follow all regulations and guidelines from DEEC. We maintain a copy of these regulations on the premises. If you have any questions about the regulations ask the Director or the Site Coordinator to show them to you.