



# **FAMILY HANDBOOK**

# Contact



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Help reading or understanding of this handbook will be provided upon request. Translation help can be provided by the Mason City Police Department or MercyOne Hospital.

**Expulsion**

Expulsion (termination of enrollment) or suspension (temporary exclusion of a child) from Sugar Plum Preschool should be avoided if possible. Punitive or exclusionary disciplines such as denying children outdoor playtime or withholding food are prohibited. If children engage in challenging behaviors that cannot be resolved, we will assess the health of the child and the adequacy of our curriculum to meet their developmental and educational needs.

We will document problems using anecdotal notes, incident reports if necessary, and creating a record of the child’s daily behavior. We will work with parents/guardians to discuss possible solutions. We will communicate with parents and guardians frequently about their child’s behavior and progress using in person visits, phone calls, texts, emails, and written notes. We will consult with outside resources such as AEA and provide a referral to special needs services, other community resources, or another preschool that meets their needs.

If continued placement in the class jeopardizes the physical safety of the child and his/her classmates after various interventions, the child may be asked to withdraw from our program or switch to another more appropriate program. If the family is unwilling to participate in consultations or independently obtain help, the child may be asked to withdraw from our program. If continued placement in our class fails to meet the child’s mental health, social-emotional, or educational needs as agreed by both the staff and the family, we will assist in the transition to another program. We will work with the parents and outside resources such as AEA and CCR&R to provide information, locate, refer, transfer records, and assist the parents in transitioning their child to a program that will provide services the child needs to succeed.

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Sugar Plum Preschool

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# Welcome Friends!

We are so glad you are here to learn, grow and thrive at Sugar Plum Preschool!

At Sugar Plum Preschool, we teach our students the importance of sharing and being a good friend- lessons that have been vital in Sugar Plum's success and growth over 50 years of preschool at Sugar Plum.

Sugar Plum Preschool began in 1967 and has always been located with our friends at Trinity Lutheran Church in Mason City, Iowa. This partnership allows us to offer two large classrooms, a dramatic play/learning center and a large motor activity center.

In 2012, Sugar Plum officially became a department of the Mason City Family YMCA. The YMCA is a cause-driven organization that is for youth development, healthy living and social responsibility. That is because a strong community can only be achieved when we invest in our kids, our health and our neighbors. This partnership provides additional services, resources and greater sustainability for our shared mission- and awesome opportunities for the kids!

We are licensed by the State of Iowa and are open to all races and denominations. We are a non-profit organization governed by an advisory committee.

Orientation will be provided by Home Visits, individual visits at Sugar Plum or at Open House.

## Playground Safety

- Upon hire the staff will complete training on proper playground safety, supervision of indoor and outdoor play spaces, universal precautions, first aid, CPR, and other early childhood trainings. A first aid kit will be taken on field trips and when playing outdoors.
- We have no permanent outside play equipment or fall surfacing at Sugar Plum. Play equipment and toys are age appropriate and in good condition. Children are taught safe play procedures such as proper use of equipment and toys. Teachers will monitor the use of toys and equipment.
- Indoor and outdoor areas will be inspected daily to make sure they are safe for children. If toys are broken, rust, have peeling paint, sharp edges, splinters, cracks, or rough surfaces, they will be thrown away. Toys with loose nuts or bolts will be tightened, repaired, or discarded.
- The play area will be inspected daily for safety hazards such as broken bottles and toys, discarded cigarettes, standing water, snow, ice, animal excrement, and stinging insect nests. Safety hazards will be removed from the play area. A daily safety checklist is kept in the kitchen and filed weekly.

# Sugar Plum Policies

## Supervision

- Teachers will directly supervise preschoolers by sight and hearing at all times while engaging with children indoors and outdoors. Developmentally appropriate child/staff ratios will be met during all activities. Teachers will regularly count children during transitions and activities whether indoors or outdoors. Staff will not stand with their backs towards children, but will stand so they can visibly observe children in all areas.
- Preschool children may use the bathroom without direct visual observation, but staff will be within hearing distance to assist children. Teachers will be ready to provide help and monitor the bathroom as needed.
- On field trips, while transitioning and in playground areas, children will be visible at all times and staff will regularly count children using face to name counting. Rules of safety will be discussed such as walking with a buddy or holding onto a walking rope.
- Staff will attend training workshops such as Passport, IESO, Essentials, and other in-service on supervision techniques, such as no cell phone use, scanning play activities, circulation around the room, bathroom supervision, and counting the children. Staff will review the supervision policy each year before school begins.
- When counting children, staff will account for each child using name to face recognition.
- During water play, children will be supervised by staff at all times and within arm's length. Staff attention will be focused on the children and not on other distracting activities.

# Goals and Objectives

## At Sugar Plum Preschool, we will:

- Provide a safe and nurturing environment which will help develop a positive attitude toward learning.
- Provide experiences which will promote the individual child's physical, emotional, social, and intellectual growth.
- Help the child develop a positive self-concept.
- Provide an opportunity for the child to participate in group activities, learn to follow a class routine and move smoothly from one activity to another.
- Provide both active and quiet learning experiences which will promote the development of skills, positive self-identity and creative expression.
- Develop sensory motor skills (large muscle, small muscle and body awareness).
- Provide outdoor activities and games when possible.



# Sugar Plum Philosophy

## Discipline/Behavior

- We encourage positive behavior by giving descriptive praise, talking about feelings, encouraging cooperation, and taking turns. We encourage self-control by developing a positive relationship and playing with the child. We display simple rules, follow a daily schedule, and use clear and simple directions.



- We guide children towards positive behavior by using positive redirection, modeling, reinforcement, reading social stories, and using the Second Step Curriculum. Children are encouraged to use self-calming strategies and regulation skills such as breathing techniques, exercise, and naming their feelings. When possible, suggestions from children are used to solve problems. Children are encouraged to problem solve together.
- Parents will be contacted and made aware of their child's behavior and progress by email, private talks, phone calls and conferences. The discipline policy is also discussed with all staff members.
- The staff attends training sessions such as Passport, IESO, Essentials, and Trauma Based Learning which focus on methods of using positive redirection, modeling, praise and self-time. We discuss how to handle difficult behaviors and situations and brainstorm possible solutions.

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# Sugar Plum Policies

## Missing Child

- It is the responsibility of the staff to ensure the safety of all children. There should be limited access to all areas where children are located. In the event that it becomes known that a child is missing, all focus must be turned to locating the child. The first step will be finding out who was the last person to see the child. An all-out search of the area must be made. After a primary search has been completed, call the parent/guardian, 911, and HHS.
- Fill out a HHS incident report. Copies will be given to the parent/guardian and HHS
- Preventative measures include staff daily counting all children using face to name recognition both indoors and outdoors. Attendance is taken before and after transitions. Each year staff will have a meeting before school starts to discuss the procedures and protocol for the missing child policy.

## Stranquation Prevention

- Window blinds will have tie-down devices to hold cords tight so they are not accessible to children. Cords used to open blinds are not accessible to children. There are no curtains at this location.
- Dramatic play items can have short handles or straps. Scarves and necklaces will only be used by children ages three and older. Activities such as stringing beads and lacing cards will be supervised.
- Pacifiers will not be used when children are at our facility.
- Parents will be asked to remove hood strings from children's jackets and sweatshirts. Drawstrings on pants should not extend more than three inches outside the item and should be sewn to the garment at the midpoint.

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# Illness or Injury

## Illness

Students should be kept home if they show any of the following symptoms:

- Temperature over 99 degrees
- Diarrhea or vomiting
- Any undiagnosed rash
- Sore or discharging eyes or ears
- A persistent cough

## Injury

Every possible precaution is taken to prevent accidents at our preschool, but once in a while they do happen. An accident report form will be sent home the day any accident occurs. The “emergency medical consent form” will provide us with the necessary information in case medical assistance is needed and parents cannot be reached.

## Child Abuse

In compliance with Chapter 232.67 of the Code of Iowa, employees of any licensed facility which serves children, including Sugar Plum Preschool, are mandatory reporters of suspected child abuse.

Child abuse is defined in Chapter 235A, Section 2 of the Code of Iowa as “any non-accidental physical injury suffered by a child as the result of the acts or omissions of the child’s parents, guardians or other persons legally responsible for the child.”

# Admission Policies

The following enrollment policies and procedures have been established in accordance with the licensing standards of the State of Iowa:

## Authorizations

1. A preschool information form
2. An emergency medical consent form
3. A field trip consent form
4. A photo release
5. A medical report and immunization card signed by a licensed physician or designee
6. Any new changes (contact information, job- please keep information current for efficient handling of emergencies)
7. Verification of legal custody- a copy of the court order recognizing the parent who has custody of the child

## State Licensing

Our preschool is licensed on a yearly basis after complying with standards established by the Iowa State Department of Human Services, County Department of Health and the Iowa State Fire Marshall. A copy of the standards is available upon request.



# Tuition and Schedule



Age	Days	Times	Cost	Class Size
3 Year-olds	Monday/ Thursday	8:30am— 11:00am	\$1,080/year or \$120/month	Maximum of 12
3 Year-olds	Tuesday/ Friday	8:30am— 11:00am	\$1,080/year or \$120/month	Maximum of 12
4 Year-olds* & 5 Year-olds	Mon/Tue/ Thur/Fri	12:00pm— 2:30pm	FREE* \$1,485/year or \$165/month	Maximum of 15

\*the Mason City Community School District provides the afternoon class for four-year-olds at no cost.

## Registration Fee

A fee of \$25 is charged at the time of registration. This registration fee is non-refundable. The registration fee is used to defray costs of Sugar Plum Preschool.

## Oral Health

Sugar Plum will support good oral health and inform parents about the I-Smile program through the North Iowa Community Action Organization. Our registration form provides contact information for each child's dentist in case of an emergency.

Children are encouraged to drink water and rinse their mouth after snack time. Nutritious snacks such as fruits, vegetables, and crackers are served to promote oral health. Sugary snacks are occasionally served for birthdays or holidays. Sugar Plum provides lessons and discussions on visiting the dentist, eating healthy foods, proper tooth brushing procedures, and plaque and tooth decay.

## Tobacco-Free Nicotine-Free Policy

Sugar Plum prohibits the use of tobacco, nicotine, electronic cigarettes, and vaping at all times in our building, play areas, and in the YMCA van that is used to transport children. A no smoking sign will be posted at the entrances to the building.

## Developmental Screening Tool

Studies show that parents' observations of their children are an excellent predictor of developmental delays. Screening will help determine if your child is meeting appropriate milestones for their age. Parents will be asked to help fill out the ASQ (Ages and Stages Questionnaire) within the first sixty days of enrollment. Your answers will help teachers get to know your child better and how we can support them in the classroom. Your answers will show your child's strengths and highlight any areas in which your child may need more help or practice. We will use the information during the school year to plan individual instruction, small and large group lessons, and curriculum. We will also use the ASQ during the year to update and access your child's progress. We will share this information with you during our fall and spring conferences.

## Inclusion Policy

As much as possible, our program will include children with identified behavioral needs or specialized health needs. Since our program is not designed to serve a population with disabilities or special health needs, specific services may be obtained through the AEA, Mason City Community School District, or other outside programs.

Upon enrollment, information shared will help to determine a child's special needs. Parents are asked if they would like additional testing for speech and other disabilities. If parents are concerned, AEA will be contacted for speech testing or other interventions. An action plan will be created by the school, parents, the child's health care consultant, and AEA. Specific methods will be planned to meet the child's individual needs such as embedded learning opportunities, using social stories, play scripts, breaking down schedules to the third degree, modeling, prompting, redirection, routines with visual support, buddy play, and assistive technology. A copy of an IFSP, IEP, or health plan will be kept in the child's folder at school.

# Tuition and Schedule

## Payment Schedule

Tuition cost is based on the entire school year and divided into nine installments. Nine monthly payments can be made from Sept. - May. Payments are due according to this monthly schedule, unless other arrangements are made with the Preschool Director.

Failure to make arrangements for late tuition payments will be charged a \$5 late fee per payment more than 7 days late.

### **EFT (Electronic Fund Transfer)**

Sugar Plum tuition can be withdrawn automatically each month from an approved checking account. A voided check and an account in the YMCA database is needed.

### **Credit/Debit Card**

Sugar Plum tuition can be charged each month or by the lump sum fee for the school year. An approved credit or debit card is needed on an account in the YMCA database.

### **Check**

Families may choose to pay tuition each month or the lump sum fee for the school year. Both fees are broken down in the table on page 5. Checks may be made out to the Mason City Family YMCA/ Sugar Plum Preschool.

**Tuition fees provide the funds necessary for Sugar Plum to operate. Therefore, we cannot make deductions for sickness or absences, including vacations or suspensions. Our operating costs continue throughout the school year and space is saved for your child.**

# Attendance

## Drop Off Procedure

All children should be brought to and picked up at the North door of Trinity Lutheran Church on 3<sup>rd</sup> Street NE. A teacher will be at the north door to greet the children and bring them to class five minutes before classes are scheduled to begin. Please call Sugar Plum if you will be delayed.

## Sign In/Sign Out

Sugar Plum will use Daxko to record daily attendance. It will include the time of arrival and departure and who picks up and drops off the child.

Any visitors will be recorded on a sign in sheet. The following information will be included: name, time in/out, reason for visit, and contact information. This information will be used in case of an emergency.

Parents will notify Sugar Plum by phone call, email, text message or SeeSaw if their child will be tardy or absent. If the parent/guardian does not contact Sugar Plum within an hour, the teacher will contact the parent/guardian.

## Late Student Pick-Up

If you are more than 15 minutes late picking up your student, the following consequences will occur:

**First and Second Late Pick-Up:** Warning

**Third Late Pick-up and More:** \$5 late fee for every 15 minutes late. Late fees must be paid prior to the next class your student attends.

# Conferences

## Progress and Conferences Reports

Progress reports are an important communication tool to connect Sugar Plum Preschool with our families.

These reports will be used to help us all achieve the student's goals and fulfill the individual needs of each student.

All parents of students in preschool classes will have in-person conferences with the Sugar Plum teachers in the spring and fall. Conference times will be noted on the calendar provided.

## Iowa IQ4K

Sugar Plum Preschool received a Level 3 IQ4K Rating from the Department of Health & Human Services (DHHS).

The IQ4K Rating system is a voluntary child care rating system for youth programs, including preschools.

According to the Iowa HHS website, the IQ4K was developed to raise the quality of child care in Iowa, increase the number of children in high-quality child care settings and to educate parents about quality in child care. Sugar Plum is proud to deliver the highest standards in preschool.



# School Supplies

## Supplies

Sugar Plum provides supplies for students. However we request you provide a simple backpack to help carry artwork, notes, etc. It should be labeled with your child's name. Students are encouraged to bring a water bottle.

## Snacks

Nutritious snacks will be served on daily basis at Sugar Plum.

## Show and Tell

Participation in Show and Tell helps to expand your student's speaking and listening skills. Show and Tell also helps develop language skills so your student will be able to express himself or herself with confidence. No toys may be brought from home except to use during Show and Tell.

## Booster Seats/Seat Belts

Children will be transported following all the Iowa Child Restraint laws. When transported in the YMCA vans booster seats will be provided and seat belts will be used.



## Donations appreciated!

As a non-profit, we strive to provide a high quality experience for our students while also being financially responsible. Donations help us deliver so much more to our youth.

Snacks	Juice	Puzzles
Books	Clothing	Toys

## Snow Days

If Mason City is closed we are closed. If Mason City has a late start the AM class is cancelled.

## Holidays

All holidays will be observed. Therefore, preschool will not be held. Calendars will detail exact days when Sugar Plum will not be held.

## Birthdays

Students' birthdays may be remembered with a special treat for snack time. Favorites include: cookies, brownies, muffins, Rice Krispies, fruit, crackers, cereal mix in baggies (No cupcakes please!). Arrangements should be made with the Director prior to the birthday celebration.

## Field Trips

All field trips will be announced to you in advance via a letter/calendar sent home.

