

## **Welcome Letter**

We are honored that you have become a part of the Countryside family. We share a small amount of your child's life and are privileged to be given the opportunity. Our goal is to impact our students' lives educationally, emotionally and socially so they are provided with a strong foundation for their educational career. We look forward to working as a family to help each child reach goals that are set for them throughout their time at Countryside Early Learning Center. We strive not only to provide a challenging academic program but a secure, personal environment of care to each individual student. We hope that we can exceed all of our families' expectations and want to take this time to personally welcome your family to Countryside Early Learning Center.

*Countryside Staff Members*



## **SCHOOL HOURS/PROGRAM HOURS**

Monday– Friday  
7:00-5:30 pm

For a calendar of school closings please look online or request a hard copy at the office.

Arrival Time (free play)	7:00-8:20 am
<i>(Please note arrival times may vary for specific programs such as VPK. Please review the Tuition Information Form for further information. All parents must walk their child to their class.)</i>	
Class Activities begin at	8:30 am
Half Day dismissal is at	12:20 pm
Full Day dismissal is within	12:20 - 5:30 pm

### **Times vary for the VPK Program-Please refer to the Tuition Information Sheet.**

***A late pick-up fee of \$25.00 will be charged for the first minute up until 30 minutes after. Over 30 minute pick-ups will be charged an additional \$15.00 for every 15 minute period. Per state licensing regulations, we may be required to contact local authorities after a certain amount of time. Countryside reserves the right to withdraw any student from their program due to lack of payment of late fees. If withdrawn, registration fee will need to be paid again.***

Section 65C-22.006(2). F.A.C., requires a current physical examination (Form 3040) and immunization record (Form 680 or 681) within 30 days of enrollment.

Section 402.3125(5), F.S., requires that parents receive a copy of the Child Care Facility Brochure, "Know Your Child Care Facility" (CF/PI 175-24).

Section 65c-20.006(3)©2., F.A.C., requires that parents are notified in writing of the disciplinary practices used by the child care facility.

## **PHILOSOPHY**

Countryside's goal is to lead, serve and guide the children of our community and surrounding communities by providing quality education through strong teacher commitment, qualifications, and experience in a safe and nurturing learning environment that celebrates the diversity of all of our families.

## **MISSION**

Here at Countryside we work diligently to provide a quality educational facility for the children that attend our school. In implementing a holistic, child centered program that nurtures every child, we have the best tools in achieving our educational goals. The early years of a child are the most influential years for language development. Together with the assistance of our qualified teachers, staff members, parents and community authorities we will supply valuable educational skills that are essential for our children's future.

## **GOALS AND OBJECTIVES**

As educators there are many roles that need to present in order to achieve higher learning for each individual student. Our goal and objective is to motivate and create strong self image in each of our students. Countryside Early Learning Center provides quality education through resources necessary to achieve cognitive development, personal interactions and the motivation to learn. In preparing our qualified educators through continual education our purpose and aim for the children of our community will continue to be achieved.

## **CURRICULUM AND ENRICHMENT**

Teachers may have a core of written themes that can be used as ideas to help inspire them. The teachers are to watch and listen to the children and utilize their observation notes so they are in-tune with children's interests for curriculum planning and providing the appropriate activities. The planned activities are integrated, i.e., the theme/topic carried through in the areas of pre-math, (counting, etc.), manipulative, dramatic play, science, language arts, cooking, and field trips. Suggestions may be given to the staff as to some activities, but each room is encouraged to be creative and flexible.

The topics may extend depending on the interest of the children. Toddlers have a more basic conceptual structure than that of the threes and fours. The topics of interest of the children may vary in the individual classrooms.

Remember when planning, the teacher is the facilitator and the child is the active learner. The teacher may assist the child by talking him through an activity and asking questions, but does not do the activity for the child. It is the process of doing an activity, not the product that helps the child learn about his/her world.

### ***Curriculum***

Our school's curriculum, High/Scope, is based on developmentally appropriate practices. The curriculum format provides sensory oriented, age appropriate learning activities that match the varied skill levels of all children. The children's day is divided so they have active and quiet experiences and participate in small and large groups for learning.

Children learn through the process known as **play**. This approach of "doing" requires thinking and experimenting to find out how things work. Children first explore the materials/toys, manipulate and then play with them in a more organized and purposeful way. By playing out real experiences, the children are organizing and beginning to understand their world. The activities in the classroom encourage exploration by using all the senses (touching, tasting smelling, listening, looking) and the discovery of concrete, relevant materials in a warm, supportive and stimulating learning environment. In a hands-on curriculum the focus is on the **process** and not the finished product. Child-made projects are produced by the children and

not teacher-made cut-outs and dittos. This approach is based on the premise that children learn best through active experiences with materials, people, events and ideas, rather than through direct teaching or pre-written sequenced exercises. (The rare exception is for occasional learning to write activities).

For the Preschool, the High/Scope curriculum addresses the whole child and provides for activities in pre-math and spatial concepts, early literacy, science, music, movement, social science, role playing, cooking, small and gross motor development, art, and social skills to promote cognitive, creative, social, emotional and physical growth.

The DLM Early Childhood Express... Your Route To Learning Success!

The DLM Early Childhood Express is a holistic, child-centered program that nurtures each child by offering carefully selected and carefully sequenced learning experiences. It provides a wealth of materials and ideas to foster the social emotional, intellectual, and physical development of children. At the same time, it nurtures the natural curiosity and sense of self that can serve as the foundation for a lifetime of learning.

The lesson format is designed to present information in a way that makes it easy for children to learn. The cycle is modeled on knowledge gained from the latest neuroscience research. Intelligence is, in large part, our ability to see patterns and build relationships out of those patterns, which is why The DLM Early Childhood Express is focused on helping children see the patterns in what they are learning. It builds an understanding of how newly taught material resembles what children already know. Then, it takes the differences in the new material and helps the children convert them into new understanding.

Every aspect of The DIM Early Childhood Express is designed to make learning instinctive. Circle Time at the beginning and end of each day helps children focus on the learning process, reflect on new concepts, and make important connections. The practice portions of the lessons are designed to allow children to apply what they have learned. Neuroscience research reveals that unless knowledge is applied within twenty-four hours of its introduction, it will probably have to be relearned.

The early years, birth to age six, are the most fertile years in an individual's life for developing language skills. So lessons in The DLM Early Childhood Express are focused on language acquisition and those all-important early reading skills. With The right foundation, reading success is only a matter of

maturation. For children to grow intellectually, they must feel confident in their abilities and secure in their relationships with teachers, family members, and peers. The DLM Early Childhood Express addresses social-emotional development in a number of ways. It is included in every lesson (via positive reinforcement), built into content connections (via interactive activities), and inherent in the way families are actively involved in The DLM Early Childhood Express classrooms.

Welcome to The DLM Early Childhood Express. Add your own ideas. Mix and match activities. Our program is designed to offer you a variety of activities on which to build a full year of exciting and creative lessons. Happy learning to you and the children in your care!

### **Key Findings in Brain Research**

The knowledge gained from recent brain research makes it possible to give children the strongest possible foundation for learning. Here are some important facts:

-At birth each child has already developed a complex brain circuitry. The way the circuitry is "wired" depends upon such external forces as nutrition, environment, and degree of sensory stimulation.

-Early experiences contribute significantly to the structure of the brain and its capabilities. Children learn in the context of relationships. Early interactions are critical.

-Brain development is not a step-by-step process. It is more like a spiral with waves or windows of opportunity. Certain periods of a child's development are especially conducive to developing specific skills.

During the first three years of life, a child forms an estimated one quadrillion synapses. However, neuron connections form only when a child interacts with his or her environment. The richer the child's environment is and the more he or she interacts with it, the more neuron connections the brain will create.

Young children are biologically predisposed to learn. With The DLM Early Childhood Express, they can do it more effectively than ever before.

## **THE WRIGHT SKILLS/ CREATIVE CURRICULUM**

**The Wright Skills** is a comprehensive skill instruction curriculum that sequentially teaches phonological awareness, oral language development, letter recognition and formation, concepts of print, phonics, and word study.

The Wright Skills five key components of reading instruction are: phonemic awareness, phonics, vocabulary development, fluency, and comprehension.

**Phonemic awareness** is the awareness that oral speech can be divided into sentences and words, and that within words are syllables, onsets and rimes, and phonemes. It is the ability to hear and distinguish the individual phonemes in words through blending, segmenting, and manipulating the sounds. The Wright Skills phonological awareness component is to develop both general and specific oral language skills.

**Phonics** is the relationship between sounds in spoken language and the letters and spelling in written language.

The Wright Skills phonics component is to make sound-symbol connections.

**Vocabulary development** is the ability to pronounce and understand the meaning of words used in oral and reading vocabulary in order to communicate.

The Wright Skills build on oral vocabulary through predictable shared reading books and engaging rhymes.

**Fluency** is the ability to read orally with automaticity, accuracy, proper expression, and good comprehension.

The Wright Skills helps develop fluency and automaticity as they learn to recognize phonetic elements and patterns in words and learn high-frequency words.

**Comprehension** is the ability to construct meaning from print and is the ultimate goal of reading.

The Wright Skills develops listening comprehension by engaging children in interactive discussions using concepts and vocabulary from the story, parts of the book-including author and title, finding the main idea, identifying

characters and settings, following the sequence of events, and comparing other stories.

## **SONRISAS**

Sonrisas Spanish School Preschool and Elementary Curriculum provides a positive language experience which fosters openness to the sounds, the songs, the stories, the culture and the people of that language. It includes lessons that build on each other which are the fundamentals in teaching Spanish effectively.

## **ENRICHMENT/EXTRA CURRICULAR ACITIVITIES**

### **IMPORTANT:**

All instructors have been fingerprinted and cleared: locally, federally, and by the state.

### **Music Enrichment**

This program is available for all students beginning with our Toddler group. Ms. Michelle, our Music Therapist, visits Countryside once a week. She visits each classroom, individually, every Friday for 30 minutes during morning school hours. She targets motor skills, creates music awareness in children, promotes response to rhythm and increases their attention span. Music Enrichment is optional.

### **Oral Health Program**

Tooth decay is one of the most chronic infectious diseases among children in the United States. Since this preventable health problem begins early, it is important to encourage good oral hygiene at an early age. Students ages 2-4 brush their teeth daily after lunch using pre-pasted disposable toothbrushes. The paste on the toothbrush is safe to swallow. Students will be taught how to use the toothbrush and how to brush their teeth. There is no charge to parents for this service. If you do not want your child to participate in our Oral Health program please notify our office.

### **Ballet**

Ballet is an activity offered once a week. Ms. Jessica, our ballet teacher, has an extensive resume. Ballet is offered to our 3-5 year old students. Fee schedule is provided on the enrollment form. First All classes are every Wednesday from 3:00 pm to 4:00 pm. To enroll your child in ballet fill out and return the enrollment form with the registration fee before the start



date. There are two shows a year!

### **Fun Bus**

This is simply fitness on wheels. The Fun Bus is a school bus that has been converted into a fitness/playhouse for kids. Although kids will be having fun they are truly fostering their motor development (this is part of one of the domains in the VPK Program). They provide structured classes (fitness oriented) and obstacle courses. The bus remains parked on school grounds during their activity time

### **Karate**

Martial Arts is a great program for children ages 3 and up. It targets the improvement of attention span, basic motor skills and listening skills. Master Jeff, Martial Arts instructor, has been working with children for many years targeting all the basic discipline techniques. Martial Arts will be held every Thursday from 10:00 am to 10:40 am.

## **THE HISTORY OF COUNTRYSIDE EARLY LEARNING CENTER**



**Established in 1981 by Diane Oakman and Vicki Piotrowski,** Countryside has secured a positive reputation in the community of Homestead by making its environment a well organized, exciting place of learning. Diane and Vicki's success in building such a reputable school was due to their philosophy on Early Childhood education; to teach academic skills, develop creativity and to build a healthy self-concept. Diane and Vicki developed a curriculum that fostered the learning for all the age groups at Countryside.

In 2007, Countryside was sold and consigned to new management. **Elisabet Ramirez** and **Marilyn Lopez;** two sisters with education majors, with views in making a quality educational facility for the children in the Homestead community and encircling communities are the present Directors. They have implemented a holistic, child centered program that nurtures each child. Early years, birth to six, are the most abundant years of an individual's life for language development. In implementing the new curriculum and setting goals of accreditation for Countryside, success within our program will remain!

### **OPEN DOOR POLICY/PARENT INVOLVEMENT**

Countryside Early Learning Center has an open door policy for all our Countryside families. Families are welcomed to come visit their child at school at anytime of the day. Parents keep in mind that we are a Learning Center and our academic program is only 3 hours. Parent involvement is very important at Countryside. All parents that would like to volunteer and/or become involved at our school must be background checked and cleared.

## **NON DISCRIMINATION POLICY**

Countryside is committed to providing an inclusive and welcoming environment to all members of our community and to ensure that educational and employment decisions are based on individuals, abilities and qualifications. Consistent with this principle, it is therefore the school's policy not to discriminate in offering access to its educational programs and activities or with respect to employment terms and conditions on the basis of race, color, gender, national origin, age, religion, creed, disability, veteran's status, sexual orientation, gender identity or gender expression.

## **ATTENDANCE**

**Attendance is very important!** Countryside is a Learning Center and all academic activities are completed between the hours of 9:00am-12:00 pm. We expect all of our students to attend school daily and timely. Early arrival is especially important to those students that are in the two (2) year old class, Preschool, and Voluntary Pre-kindergarten Program (VPK). We recommend and encourage you to bring your child to school within the instructional time to insure full participation on the daily lessons. **No breakfast will be served after 8:50 am.**

Tardies are an ongoing concern. Tardies affect your child's academic progress and disrupts the learning environment for all students. Countryside holds the right to withdraw any student for excessive tardiness.

You should call the school (305-246-5315) if your child will be absent more than one day. If after three (3) absences the school does not receive a phone call, your child can be withdrawn. ***If withdrawn, registration fee will need to be paid again. No refund, credit or allowance will be given for days absent.***

## **EMERGENCY CONTACT AND AUTHORIZED PICKUP**

For the safety of your child please provide detail information in the enrollment packet regarding authorized release persons. All persons authorized to pick up, whether authorized by written consent, within the enrollment packet or verbally over the phone, **must** have government issued photo identification at the time of pick up. All persons authorized to pick up must be 18 years of age or older. No child will be released to any person unrecognized without appropriate photo identification. No child will

be released to any person that is intoxicated and/or impaired regardless if they are an authorized pickup contact. Countryside holds the right to determine at our own discretion if a person is intoxicated and/or impaired.

## **PRIVACY POLICY**

All information collected at the time of enrollment will only be used to provide optimal service to our students and their families, for security and safety of the child, and/or health related issues.

## **SAFETY AND SECURITY**

### **EMERGENCY PREPAREDNESS**

Countryside has a strict commitment in providing a secure and safe educational facility. Currently in place is our Emergency Preparedness Program that all teachers and staff members, together with their students, practice on a monthly basis. Our Emergency Preparedness Program includes procedures in handling inclement weather, fire emergencies, and code red circumstances. All emergency routes are posted in each classroom alongside written procedures on managing any type of emergency. Monthly school drills are conducted to ensure that all classrooms react within appropriate time and correctly throughout the drill.

### **VISITORS**

All persons that are not an identified family member or parent must have a valid photo identification card to be inside the school premises. All maintenance, inspector, or other public workers must have a clipped photo identification card on their attire, stating their name and the company they work for. Any person picking up any child at our facility must have a photo-identification and their name written on the Enrollment Form. Any person with a photo-identification available but whose name does not appear on the authorization section of the enrollment form will have to go through proper clearance before picking up any child. Any parent that would like to interact with their child in their classroom and/or school field trips **MUST** have a level 2 background screening. For any school activities, for example, Easter Egg Hunt, School Shows, etc., parents and/or family members are welcomed to participate for the event and then must go.

### **PHYSICAL ENVIRONMENT**

A bi-monthly inspection is conducted to include, but not limited to, of the heating and air conditioner vents, air vents, filters, exhaust fans, ceiling fans and dryer vents, if applicable, to ensure areas are clean and free from dust or lint build-up and properly working and inspection of the outdoor playground equipment, such as connectors, moving parts and fall zones. All classroom equipment is inspected to insure that it is in good working condition. Our facility is cleaned every late afternoon to maintain, as much as possible, a bacteria free environment on our premises. Infant and Toddler toys are bleached after use and all other classroom toys and nap mats are bleached once a week.

### **REGISTRATION FEE**

A non-refundable \$150.00 registration fee is due **prior** to enrollment **and** the beginning of a new school year. A registration fee is the guarantee that your child is enrolled in our program.

### **LATE PICK UP FEE**

Countryside Early Learning Center is open from 7:00 am -5:30 pm, Monday-Friday, all year, except for holidays and school closings listed on the school calendar. I understand that if I fail to pick up my child at the closing time, a \$25.00 late pickup fee will apply.

### **TUITION DISCOUNTS**

If families enroll more than one child within the immediate family, a ten (\$10.00) dollar a week discount is granted on the lesser tuition rate.

### **RETURNED CHECK FEE**

If tuition payment is returned from our banking institution for any reason, a returned check fee of \$25.00 will be applied to your account. All checks that are returned for insufficient funds will not be re-deposited. A cash payment including the returned check fee must be made on the same day notification is given regarding the returned check.

### **TUITION PAYMENT AND LATE FEES**

Payment plans will be determined at the time of enrollment. Payment plans available are bi-weekly and monthly payments **ONLY**. Bi-weekly payment plans are due on Monday of the first week of service and must include the second week of service. A late fee of \$25.00 will apply after Tuesday of the first week if payment is not received. Monthly payment plans are due before

the 5<sup>th</sup> of the month and must include all payments for all weeks in the month. To determine how many weeks are in a month, Mondays should be counted. A late fee of \$25.00 will apply after the 5<sup>th</sup> of the month. If the 5<sup>th</sup> of the month falls on a weekend, payment must be made on the working day prior to the 5<sup>th</sup>.

Tuition is due in accordance to the payment plan noted in your child's enrollment form REGARDLESS of your child's attendance. Within the school term (August-June) tuition is due whether your child is absent, school is closed, and/or family vacations are taken. ***Countryside reserves the right to withdraw any student from their program due to lack of payment of tuition and late fees. If withdrawn, registration fee will need to be paid again. No tuition refund, credit or allowance will be given for days absent. Please refer to the Tuition Information Sheet for further details that apply.***

### **AGENCY REIMBURSEMENT**

Parents/Guardians are solely responsible for any tuition payment and late fees due by any agency or third-party reimbursement in accordance to their contract. Parents/Guardians under contract are solely responsible for communicating any changes regarding their status with the agency or third-party that may affect reimbursement. Parents/Guardians are solely responsible for all tuition and/or late fees that are accrued due to failure of communicating status changes with an agency or third-party.

### **TUITION DISCOUNTS**

Families enrolling more than one child within their immediate family, are granted a ten (\$10.00) dollar a week discount on the lesser tuition rate.

### **TUITION PAYMENT METHODS**

Countryside accepts checks, cash, money order, debit card and credit cards as a form of payment. Credit Card payments ensue a 2% surcharge per charge. For detail information on what credit cards are accepted please contact the office.

### **LATE PICK UP FEE**

Countryside Early Learning Center is open from 7:00 am -5:30 pm, Monday-Friday, all year, except for holidays and school closings listed on the school

calendar. I understand that if I fail to pick up my child at the closing time, a \$25.00 late pickup fee will apply.

### **RETURNED CHECK FEE**

If any payment made by check is returned for any reason, a returned check fee of \$25.00 will be charged in addition to the returned check amount. All checks that are returned for insufficient funds will not be re-deposited. A cash payment including the returned check fee must be made on the same day notification is given regarding the returned check.

### **DROP OFF & DISMISSAL**

All parents/guardians/authorized persons are responsible to walk their child into the building and directly into their classroom during drop off. At 9:00 am the side gate will be locked for drop off. Drop off will need to be made at the office and your child will be escorted by a teacher to their classroom. For pick up, parents/guardians/authorized persons are responsible to pick up their child from their classroom. After 4:30 pm the side gate will be locked and dismissal will be through the main entrance.

### **WITHDRAWALS AND TRANSFERS**

Please notify the office (305-246-5315) at least one day in advance when you plan to withdraw/transfer your child. No written notification is necessary for withdrawal.

### **SICK**

Fevers are common in young children. If your child has a fever of 101 F or higher please keep him/her home. If your child, at the center, develops a fever of 101 F or higher, you will be called to pick him/her up. If your child has a fever less than 101 F you will be notified and you may state your wishes at this time. Please have your child free of fever for over 24 hours before bringing him/her back to school.

Diarrhea can be highly contagious if due to illness. If your child has diarrhea please do not bring him/her to school. If your child has 2 or more diarrhea episodes while at school, you will be called to pick him/her up. If your child vomits while at school, you will be called to pick him/her up. Please have your child free of vomiting for a minimum of 24 hours.

A rash on a child can mean many things. Some rashes caused by illnesses can be highly contagious. Please do not send your child to school with a rash unless their doctor has provided written consent. If your child develops a rash while at the center, you will be called to pick him/her up.

Parents are responsible to pick up their child promptly if notified that they are sick. Parents are also responsible to notify the school if their child contracts a contagious disease. A physician's notice for clearance is required in order for their child to return to school.

If your child is absent due to illness, it is your responsibility to notify the school. This helps maintain the spread of bacteria and illness throughout the school. A doctor's notice is required after three days. If your child is sick with a contagious illness, a doctor's note providing clearance is required before returning to school. If the school is not notified within a timely manner your child can be withdrawn and a registration fee will need to be paid.

## **MEDICATION**

There are strict guidelines for administering medication to a child. If your child needs to take a prescription drug, the label must be prescribed to your child with your child's name on it, dates on prescription medication must be current and a Medical Authorization Form must be completely filled out. Prescribed drugs are administered in exact accordance to its label. If your child must take an "Over the Counter" drug, you must provide the drug and a Medical Authorization Form must be completely filled out. "Over the Counter" drugs can be administered for a maximum of five (5) days with parent consent. After the allotted consent time, a doctor's letter must be provided to continue administering medication to a child.

Countryside holds the right to discontinue administration of medication to any child. No medication shall be given by child care personnel without the signed permission of the parent/legal guardian. All medication must be in the original container with the child's name, name of the physician (prescribed medication), medication name, and medication directions written on the label. All medication shall be dispensed according to written directions on the prescription label or manufacturer's label. Medication which has expired or is no longer being administered shall be returned to the parent/legal guardian. Authorization forms must be written out on a weekly



basis for all medications. Authorization forms will be void after a week regardless of dates written by parent/legal guardian and/or dates on medication label.

All medications are to be given to the office for storage in the medicine cabinet. **No medication should be left in your child's bag.** It is the parent's responsibility to bring all medication to the office during drop off time.

### **IMMUNIZATION AND PHYSICAL FORMS**

Dade County health laws require HRS form 680 (immunization record) and HRS form 3040 (physical form) for all children attending school or a child care facility. Both immunization and physical forms must be provided at the time of registration. Forms must be continuously updated throughout the year. If any medical records are expired or not valid your child can be withdrawn. The center is not responsible for expired/invalid forms. Please make a note of the expiration dates written on your child's medical forms to avoid having your services discontinued. ***If withdrawn, registration fee will need to be paid again.***

### **ACCIDENT/INCIDENT**

Parents are notified when their child has an accident/incident at the center. If a severe injury is the outcome of an accident/incident we will contact 911, parents will be notified immediately by phone and an Accident/Incident Report Form will be completely filled out. If an accident/incident occurs at the center that is not severe, an Accident/Incident Report Form will be completely filled out and parents will be notified at the time of arrival. We hold the right to write an Accident/Incident Report Form for any child that has a pre-existing injury. Parents are required to sign all Accident/Incident Report Forms.

### **HOME TOYS/VALUABLE ITEMS/PERSONAL ITEMS**

Home toys are not allowed in school. The center is not responsible for any lost or broken toys.

Valuable, personal items such as watches, chains, etc. should not be worn to school. The center is not responsible for any lost or broken valuable, personal items.

## **LUNCH/SNACKS/FOOD PROGRAM**

Countryside provides a morning snack, lunch, and an afternoon snack to all our students including our infants and toddlers. Countryside is part of the Miami Dade Health Departments Food Program and a completed application must be submitted with the enrollment form. This application is not a qualifying application but it is necessary to have in every child's file. It is the parent/legal guardians' responsibility to notify the school, in the enrollment packet, of any allergies their child may have to any foods being served. If a child is allergic to any foods a Special Dietary Conditions Form must be completely filled out and signed by the child's physician. If anything changes in regards to any child's eating habits and/ or conditions, it is the parent's responsibility to contact the office and make the appropriate changes to the enrollment form.

Since we are part of the Health Departments Food Program all meals served are within their guidelines. Portions are monitored closely for each age group. Milk is served for the majority of our meals served. We provide whole milk for all children age one. Skim milk and/or 1% milk is provided to children age 2 and up. Soy milk is available to students that are not able to drink regular milk for whatever reason. Parents must notify in writing that soy milk is preferred for their child. If request is made in the enrollment form by a parent to provide their child with soy milk, that is sufficient notification. Any changes that need to be made for any child must be detailed in writing or in the enrollment form.

Our center provides a home cooked lunch daily. There are four (4) lunch menus that rotate weekly. Please refer to the lunch menus online. Home lunch should be provided on the days that the facility is serving a meal that your child cannot eat due to allergies and/or religious purposes. All home lunches should be easy to serve, no cooking will be done. We will warm if necessary. No storing of lunch foods is allowed. The center does not provide breakfast to any child but will serve it if provided by the parent/legal guardian. All breakfast foods must be easy to serve; no cooking will be done. We will warm foods if necessary. No storing of breakfast foods is allowed. Your child must arrive before 8:50 am to have breakfast served. No breakfast will be served after 8:49 am.

Two snacks are provided daily. Please refer to our snack menu online. Home snacks are welcomed. Please write your child's name on all his/her snacks. Any snacks not eaten will be sent home. No storing of snacks is allowed. Children will have all school meals served daily unless they cannot eat it for allergy reasons. If home meals are provided school meals will still be served.

## **NAPPING**

Naps are between the hours of 12:30 pm and 2:30 pm. The Department of Children and Family requires two blankets (one for the child and one for the mat). Blankets should be labeled clearly with your child's name. A small pillow is optional. All blankets will remain at school till the end of the week. After a week they will be sent home for washing. If two blankets are not provided by the parent/legal guardian, the center will provide them and charge you a purchase price of \$40.00. Naps are strictly respected. Parents/Legal Guardians are responsible for any fees assessed due to non-compliance with our napping policy. If fees assessed are not paid, Countryside holds the right to withdraw your child from our program. ***If withdrawn, registration fee will need to be paid again.*** Please notify your child's teacher of early pick-ups during nap time so personal items may be gathered prior to dismissal.

## **UNIFORMS**

Uniforms are mandatory! Countryside requires that all students beginning with our Toddler group and above wear uniform daily. New enrollment must have uniform prior to starting. If your child arrives to school wearing inappropriate uniform you will be notified to pick up your child. All extra clothing provided for your child for purposes of potty accidents, **must** be uniform clothing. Uniform attire must be required t-shirts (with logo) and/or polo's (with embroidery). Uniform bottoms must be uniform material. No cargo, denim, or cotton allowed! For cold temperatures thermals, long sleeves, and/ or leggings can be worn underneath your child's uniform. Any layering **under** the uniform is allowed. Sweater and jackets do not need to be uniform. For information on vendors that provide the Countryside uniforms contact the office.

## **PLAYGROUND PLAY**

All playground equipment and area is for school use only. After dismissal students are not allowed on the playground equipment or area. Countryside is not responsible for any injuries suffered on playground equipment and area before drop off and after dismissal.

Playground and Pavilion are available for rental on weekends. For more information please contact our office.

## **HOLIDAYS/SCHOOL CLOSINGS**

Tuition is due in accordance to the payment plan noted on your child's enrollment form regardless of your child's attendance. For Christmas recess, tuition must be paid in advance prior to school closing. Countryside is closed a few times throughout the year. Please refer to the school calendar online. There is no refund, credit or allowance given for school closing and/or holidays. If a holiday falls on a weekend, it will be observed on either the preceding Friday or the following Monday.

## **FIELD TRIPS**

Fieldtrips are fun out of school activities throughout the year. Students ages 2 and up can participate in school fieldtrips. Not all fieldtrips are available for all ages. Further information is sent home regarding fieldtrips as event approaches. Payment must be received with permission form in order for your child to be registered for the fieldtrip. No permission forms will be accepted without payment. All payments for fieldtrips are non-refundable. **All children must wear a Countryside black T-shirt (not polo) to attend fieldtrip.**

## **INCLEMENT WEATHER**

Countryside follows Miami Dade County Public School (MDCPS) schedule for inclement weather. It is the parent/legal guardian's responsibility to keep track of local weather channels for any changes MDCPS makes to their schedule due to inclement weather. I understand the Countryside holds the right to close the school at any time deemed necessary due to inclement weather in the Homestead area. There is no refund, credit, or allowance for days the facility is closed due to schedule changes.

## **DISCIPLINARY PRACTICE**

Our program insures that age-appropriate, constructive disciplinary practices are used for your child. This care will allow the child time to look over his/her behavior. We will encourage children to choose alternatives to improper behavior. To insure a safe and successful program, discipline is a must.

Steps to behavior modification:

- 1 Children will be corrected and asked to change their behavior.
- 2 Children will be re-directed from situation.
- 3 Children will be placed in "Time Out".
- 4 Parents will be contacted if behavior is not corrected.

Children shall not be subjected to discipline which is severe, humiliating, or frightening. Discipline shall not be associated with food, rest or toileting. Spanking or any other form of physical punishment is strictly prohibited.

### **GUIDANCE POLICY**

Children's behavior is influenced by their overall development, their environment, and their teachers. Each child differs in activity level, attention span, comprehension and receptiveness. Children must learn to develop socially acceptable and appropriate behavior as they grow to maturity.

This policy is the guideline used at Countryside Early Learning Center to assist children in developing proper socialization, self-control, confidence, and compassion in their interactions with others. Guidance is required to ensure proper conduct, prevent injury, and provide our students with an understanding of their classmate's feelings.

It is important that the teacher is a positive model, creating an atmosphere that provides students opportunities for desirable behavior. The steps below explain how our staff provides healthy direction:

1. Explaining to the children what behavior is acceptable.
2. Focusing on the child's behavior, rather than on the child

3. Allowing the children time to respond to the expectations
4. Reinforcing appropriate behavior
5. Being willing to listen and respond in a fair, supportive manner.
6. Observing children in order to anticipate potential difficulties.

Intervention Strategies used assist create a positive climate and minimize problems in a supportive, non punitive way:

1. By establishing eye contact and calling the child's name in a calm controlled voice to gain child's attention;
2. Remaining near the child in situations where he/she may be losing self-control;
3. Children will be reminded of rules taking their feelings into consideration.
4. Diverting the child.
5. Verbal and/or physical assistance will be provided by modeling problem solving if a child is discouraged or frustrated.
6. Children will be offered choices in a non-threatening and non-punitive way to assist them in meeting expectations or to reinforce limits.
7. We will clarify the inevitable or unavoidable outcome of the behavior to the child.
8. If the child is unable to resolve a problem or take responsibility for their actions, they will be re-directed to another activity, or in special circumstances, be limited in the use of a piece of equipment.
9. If all else fails, the child will be removed from the situation in a way that ensures that the 'time out' is a positive learning experience:
  - (a) prior to the use of 'time out' the child will be given an explanation of what it means and what it involves.
  - (b) the 'time out' place will be located within the play area, where they can still be supervised, but far enough from the activity.
  - (c) the child will be allowed to determine when he/she can return to the activity.

- (d) for pre-schoolers the 'time out' period will be no more than one minute per year of age, to a maximum of five (5) minutes.
  - (e) appropriate or acceptable behavior of the child following 'time out' will receive praise.
10. On a rare occasion where a child loses control and could possibly injure him or herself or others; embracing the child to soothe them until self-control is gained may be required.
11. Opportunity to make amends.

### Practices that are Unacceptable

Countryside Early Learning Center considers the following practices unacceptable and will not tolerate their use:

- Corporal punishment (ie. shoving, hitting, shaking, spanking)
- Harsh, belittling, or degrading treatment.
- Confinement, unsupervised separation from others
- Depriving children of meals, snacks, rest or necessary use of the toilet as punishment

### **RENEWAL FORMS**

There are several forms that need to be renewed on a yearly basis. It is the parents' responsibility to comply with all renewal dates and requirements for processing renewal forms.

### **NEW STUDENT / PARENT ORIENTATION**

At Countryside we encourage our parents to visit our facility, during our working days between the hours of 7:00 am-12:00 pm, no appointment necessary, with your child to meet the teachers, tour the classrooms, and learn about our program. An Enrollment Packet will be provided to you and detailed information regarding our program will be supplied.

Starting in a new setting can be an exciting yet scary experience for a young child. Even children who are looking forward to child care may become apprehensive when they realize that you are not going to be there all day. This feeling is a normal reaction. Since children often sense parents' apprehension, it is important for both parents and children to be comfortable and acquainted with the new routine. We help you and your child through the orientation period as necessary. Although we do not have a formal trial

period, please recognize that it may take 2-3 weeks for your child to fully adjust to his/her new routine.

## **CHILD ABUSE & NEGLECT REPORTING REQUIREMENTS**

**All child care personnel are mandated by law to report their suspicious of child abuse, neglect, or abandonment to the Florida Abuse Hotline in accordance with s. 39.201 of the Florida Statutes (F.S.).**

\* Child care personnel must be alert to the physical and behavioral indicators of child abuse and neglect. "Child Abuse or Neglect" is defined in s. 39.201, F.S., as "harm or threatened harm" to a child's health (mental or physical) or welfare by the acts or omissions by a parent, adult household member, other person responsible for the child's welfare, or for purposes of reporting requirements by any person.

### **Categories include:**

- Physical Abuse or Neglect (i.e. unexplained bruises, hunger, lack of supervision...)
  - Emotional Abuse or Neglect (i.e. impairment in the ability to function, depression...)
  - Sexual Abuse (i.e. withdrawal, excessive crying, physical symptoms...)
- \* Reports must be made immediately to the Florida Abuse Hotline Information System by
- Telephone at 1-800-96-ABUSE (1-800-962-2873), or
  - Fax at 1-800-914-0004, or
  - Online at <http://www.dcf.state.fl.us/abuse/report/>.
- \* Failure to perform duties of a mandatory reporter pursuant to s. 39.201, F.S. constitutes a violation of the standards in ss. 402.301-319, F.S. and is a first degree misdemeanor. **Remember**, it is each child care personnel's responsibility to report suspected abuse and/or neglect.
- \* All reports are confidential. However, persons who are mandated reporters (child care personnel) are required to give their name when making a report.
- \* It is important to give as much identifying and factual information as possible when making a report.
- \* Any person, when acting in good faith, is immune from liability in accordance with s. 39.203(1)(a), F.S.



- \* For more information about child abuse and neglect, visit the Department's website at [www.myflorida.com/childcare](http://www.myflorida.com/childcare) and select "Training Requirements." The Department offers a 4-hour *Identifying and Reporting Child Abuse and Neglect* course for child care providers. This course is an overview of the various types of abuse and neglect, indicators that may be observed, the legal responsibility of mandatory reporters, and the proper procedure for reporting abuse and neglect, as required by ss. 402.305(2) and 402.313(1), F.S. The course is offered both online and instructor- based throughout Florida.

## **PHILOSOPHY/PRACTICE OF TV AND VIDEO**

Countryside Early Learning Center does not use TV or Video during instructional time. Learning materials and other educational resources are utilized to create cognitive development.

## **PARENT SIGNING IN/OUT RESPONSIBILITIES**

Parents are responsible to sign their child in and out on a daily basis. Providing *specific* date and time is very important to maintain accurate attendance within the school. It is mandatory that all sign in/out logs are maintained daily.

If your child is enrolled in a funded program (School Readiness and/or Voluntary Pre-Kindergarten Program/VPK) it is your responsibility to maintain required sign in/out logs as per the rules and regulations of each program.

## **TOXIC PRODUCTS**

All toxic products are stored in a cabinet with lock and key. If individual classroom does not provide a cabinet with lock and key, all toxic products are stored in the toxic material cabinet, locked. All toxic products are **any** product that states on label, "Keep out of reach of children" or any similar phrase.

## **UNUSUAL BEHAVIOR/ CONFLICT RESOLUTION**

If a child's behavior is disruptive or inappropriate, the teacher will speak to the child about the inappropriate behavior. If the child does not respond appropriately, according to their age, he/she will be asked to sit on a chair away from the group, but within the classroom (one minute per each year of life). If the child continues to be disruptive the Director will be notified.

If a child is having a particularly difficult time following the rules of the school, the teacher will request a conference with the parents and the Director to obtain a solution. If this approach is unsuccessful further assistance may be recommended to observe the child and discuss with the parents, teachers, and the Director what the best approach to a resolution will be.

- At no time will any form of corporal punishment be used.
- No child will be subjected to cruel or severe punishment, humiliation or verbal abuse.
- No child will be denied food as a form of punishment.
- No child will be punished for soiling, wetting, or not using the toilet.

### **CHILD OBSERVATIONS**

Countryside does quarterly observations on all students enrolled. To improve the quality of services provided to your child, Miami-Dade County, Department of Human Services, Child Development Services and The Early Learning Coalition of Miami-Dade/Monroe (the agency that oversees policy development and funding for early care and education) has coordinated a Screening and Assessment Program. This important project involves the efforts of everyone working together to help your child enter elementary school ready to succeed.

The screening and assessment process will be based on activities your child is involved in on a daily basis. The results of the screenings and/or assessments will have no bearing on your child's receipt of services. All data gathered from this program will be kept confidential. Part of this process will involve, but is not limited to the collection of parent and teacher information. Researchers and your child's teachers will have access to the data in order to make informed decisions about how best to improve the quality of services provided to your child.