



Parent Handbook **Effective December 2023**

Administrative Office

4094 W. Chinden Blvd.
Garden City, Idaho 83714
(208)954-5454

Giraffe Laugh on 12th & Grand Ave

1191 W. Grand Ave.
Boise, Idaho 83702
(208) 954-5461

Garden City Preschool

Located inside The Boys & Girls Club
610 E. 42nd St.
Garden City, Idaho 83714
(208) 954-5462

Giraffe Laugh off State Street

3641 N. Market Lane
Boise, Idaho 83703
(208) 954-5465

Giraffe Laugh School-Aged Summer Program

Located at The Vineyard Christian Fellowship:
4950 N. Bradley St.
Garden City, Idaho 83714
Information Phone: (208) 954-5454

Hablamos Español TTY: 1 (800) 377-3529

Giraffe Laugh is an equal opportunity provider and employer.

Website: www.giraffelaugh.org

Dear Parents,

Giraffe Laugh provides early childhood education and nurturing while ensuring school readiness, empowering families and building strong futures.

Welcome to Giraffe Laugh Early Learning Centers (GL). You have made a quality choice for your child and we welcome you to our Giraffe Laugh family. Giraffe Laugh is a Star rated program, indicating that you've made a great choice for you and your child.

Please keep us informed of how we can meet your and your child's needs while they are in our care. Communication is very important to us and a vital part of your child's success and comfort in our center. Thank you for choosing one of our Giraffe Laugh Early Learning Centers!

PURPOSE & GOALS

Giraffe Laugh is a nonprofit dedicated to providing quality, affordable childcare and preschool while ensuring school readiness to all families regardless of their ability to pay for that care. Parents are the most important part of a child's upbringing and are empowered to lead their family to success. Building strong futures in the Treasure Valley is our overall goal.

The Board of Directors is made up of non-parent community members and Giraffe Laugh parents that represent families from all income levels.

- **Giraffe Laugh on 12th & Grand Ave.** provides care for up to 64 children ages 6 weeks to 5 years.
- **Giraffe Laugh off State St.** provides care for up to 75 children ages 6 weeks to 5 years.
- **Giraffe Laugh in Garden City (Preschool Collaborative)** provides care for up to 22 children, ages 3.5-5 years.
- **Giraffe Laugh Summer Program** provides care for 30 school-aged children entering kindergarten through 6th grade.

Each center and its staff does not discriminate on the basis of race, color, income, religion, sex, nationality, disabilities, non-disabilities, age, appearance or family status.



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REGISTRATION AND FEES

To enroll your child a registration form must be completed, a payment contract must be signed and immunization records provided. Your child must be fully immunized and/or up to date on their immunizations in order for us to begin and continue caring for your child.

A nonrefundable fee of \$50 will be charged at the time of enrollment and \$25 for each additional child. This is an annual fee that is renewed each September. The amount is prorated depending on the month you begin.

Any schedule changes must be requested before the start of the next month and will only be allowed at the first of the month.

Part time (PT) is either half-days or full days and is contracted ahead of time. Families will be charged for all days scheduled regardless of whether or not they use those hours. "Switching" days is not allowed unless it is to alter the schedule permanently. Full time (FT) rates are for children attending 5 Full Days per week. Scholarships are available for low-income families. If you feel you may qualify for a reduced rate, please speak to the Site Director at your child's center, where you enroll your child(ren).

Drop-in care is unique in that parents may call in at any time and request a spot for their child. If we have an opening, we will accommodate your child and put them on the schedule. If we do not have an opening, we will put them on a waiting list and notify the parent as soon as possible if the schedule opens up.

If we do schedule a child, it is expected that the spot is paid for whether or not the child attends. With adequate notice this charge will be suspended.

Drop-in differs from PT care in that we will reserve the requested time for part timers & parents will never need to call in to see if that time is available. They may however, call in to request additional time whenever necessary and we will accommodate them if space is available.

WHEN IS PAYMENT EXPECTED?

Payment is expected at the 1st of each month for all parents with reserved space (with the exception of drop-in children; payment is expected the day childcare is provided). Payment in full is required no later than the 15th of the month. If payment is not paid in full by the 15th of the month then on the 16th of the month a \$25 late fee will accrue. Part-time parents are charged according to how many full or half days they have reserved for their child. *Accounts must be paid in full by the end of each month for your child to continue care the next month, unless previous arrangements have been made.*

In the event that a parent arrives after our closing time there will be a charge. Parents will be charged \$1 per minute for every minute past closing.



Scholarships are available to families who meet income guidelines, so please contact office personnel for more information about scholarships. If you have an emergency request for anything beyond the normal amount charged at each income level, please obtain the Request for Emergency Funds Form from the office and submit it immediately.

Initially, recipients of the Idaho Child Care Program (ICCP) are expected to make payments that are equal to the approximate pending co-pay. If you need assistance with your co-pay, please contact office personnel for more information on ways we can assist you.

If for any reason you cannot follow these policies, please contact the Site Director to make satisfactory arrangements for payment.

VACATIONS, SICK DAYS & CANCELLATIONS

We staff according to our daily schedule that indicates how many staff members are needed. We maintain low ratios and a high quality of childcare, therefore, it is important for us to know when children will or will not be present. We also have a drop-in service that many people utilize. When your child is not going to attend on a scheduled day, it is important that you let us know so that we can call people on our waiting list who need our services. When your child is ill or you will be on vacation, please let us know as soon as possible.

You will be granted two vacation weeks per year based on your child’s weekly schedule. Your vacation days can be used when your child is ill, for one of Giraffe Laugh’s scheduled closures or for actual vacation time. In order to receive a credit for vacation you must submit your request to the Site Director at your center; requests sent directly to the bookkeeper will not be accepted. Vacation credit will not be granted unless a vacation slip has been submitted. After your vacation days are used for the year all other absences are expected to be paid in full. (See chart below for examples:)

# of Scheduled Full Time Days/Week		# of vacation days/year	# of Scheduled Part Time Days/Week		# of ½ days of vacation/year
5 full days scheduled/week	You are entitled to -->	10 full days of vacation/year	5 - ½ days/week	You are entitled to-->	10 - ½ days of vacation/year
4 full days scheduled/week	You are entitled to -->	8 full days of vacation/year	4- ½ days/week	You are entitled to-->	8 - ½ days of vacation/year
3 full days scheduled/week	You are entitled to -->	6 full days of vacation/year	3 - ½ days/week	You are entitled to-->	6 - ½ days of vacation/year
2 full days scheduled/week	You are entitled to -->	4 full days of vacation/year	2 - ½ days/week	You are entitled to-->	4 - ½ days of vacation/year
1 full day scheduled/week	You are entitled to -->	2 full days of vacation/year	1 - ½ day/week	You are entitled to-->	2 - ½ days of vacation/year



There will be no “cashing in” at the end of the year (carry over from one year to the next). The year refers to the calendar year, January 1st - December 31st.

If you will be more than an hour late, please call us or notify your child’s teacher prior to them being tardy; otherwise, your child’s name will be removed from the schedule for that day. We appreciate your cooperation with this request as it allows us to schedule staff properly as well as accept drop-in children.

WHAT WILL MY CHILD NEED TO BRING?

We hope that your child’s transition from home to school is a smooth one and we are accustomed to children bringing in support items from home to make this transition easier. PLEASE label all items that your child brings and wears to Giraffe Laugh, as it is difficult to distinguish the belongings of all of our children by memory only.

We caution parents that if your child wishes to bring in a toy to share that we will not be responsible for its loss or damage. We understand that it may make it easier for parents in the morning not to have a battle about “toys from home.” We also recognize that there is value in bringing one’s toys from home, as well as sharing them with others. However, we also feel that the concept of sharing is often better learned with the neutral toys at Giraffe Laugh, therefore we discourage this practice as much as possible.

- **INFANTS:**

- Parents will need to provide bottles, diapers, wipes and breast milk (if using) for their infant.
- Information for breastfeeding parents:
 - We provide a designated, comfortable breastfeeding place to breastfeed.
 - Giraffe Laugh will educate families and staff that a mother may breastfeed her child wherever she has a legal right to be.
 - Staff will follow the mother’s feeding plans, including her plans if she is late to breastfeed.
 - Bottles will not be given when a mother is expected for breastfeeding.
- If you are not nursing, Giraffe Laugh will provide formula based on the guidelines of The Child and Adult Care Food Program via the Department of Education.
- We will provide baby food and snacks for your baby.
- All baby foods are served as a single item only.
- There are no mixed meals so you know exactly what your child is eating.
- When you and the teacher decide it is time to eat table food, it is provided for breakfast, lunch and afternoon snack.
- ***We follow a safe sleep policy. Infants should be placed on their backs to sleep.*** See Safe Sleep Practices sheet added as an addendum.

- **TODDLERS:**

- Tots will need diapers, wipes and comfort items that they are attached to as well as outdoor clothing, shoes and coats as needed.
- Breakfast, lunch and afternoon snacks are provided that adhere to the Child and Adult Care Food Program via the Department of Education.



- Your child will receive whole milk until they turn two, then they will be served 1% milk.
- All foods served are listed on the food pyramid and include a grain, vegetable, fruit, protein source and a dairy product.
- **PRESCHOOLERS:**
 - Preschoolers need to bring appropriate clothing for outdoor play, coats, shoes, a change of clothing and a well-rested body.
 - All centers provide breakfast, lunch and an afternoon snack as described above in the toddler section.
 - It is common for preschoolers to decrease food intake so do not worry if they suddenly do not care for the same foods or won't try new items. This is normal. We simply keep trying by serving things over and over and often they move beyond being selective before you know it!
 - No food is forced on the children as we eat family style and children are able to help themselves to things they like. Since it is all healthy food, we know they are getting nutrients that are good for them.
- **SCHOOL AGE SUMMER PROGRAM:**
 - The school age children need to bring appropriate clothing for outdoor play according to the day's weather.
 - In case of water play we appreciate having a change of clothes for all of the kids.
 - We do have "quiet time" during the day and your child is welcome to bring a blanket &/or pillow.
 - The school aged children are usually reassured to know that they don't have to nap but they do need to rest their bodies for an hour. Their day will be very busy and active and that rest time is much needed to re-energize them.
 - The center will provide breakfast, lunch and an afternoon snack every day.

TELL ME MORE ABOUT MEALS AND THE FOOD PANTRY

At all centers, a healthy USDA-approved breakfast is provided at 8:30 a.m., a healthy USDA-approved lunch is provided at 11:30 a.m., and a healthy afternoon snack is provided at 2:30 p.m. Infants are provided with formula or breast milk and baby food. Giraffe Laugh is a PEANUT AND TREE NUT FREE ENVIRONMENT.

If you are experiencing hunger in your household, you can access one of our food pantries, which are located at each site. Please ask office personnel or your child's teacher if you need to avail yourself of free food. We want to help span the gap during evening and weekend meal times. Our pantries are open during business hours & you may take all that you need with no limit on visits or amounts.

The U.S. Dept of Agriculture prohibits discrimination against its customers, employees, and applicants for employment on the bases of race, color, national origin, age, disability, sex, gender identity, religion, reprisal, and where applicable, political beliefs, marital status, familial or parental status, sexual orientation, or all or part of an individual's income is derived from any public assistance program, or protected genetic information in employment or in any program or activity conducted or funded by the Department. (Not all prohibited bases will apply to all programs and/or employment activities.) If you wish to file a Civil Rights program complaint of discrimination, complete the USDA Program Discrimination Complaint Form, found online at: http://www.ascr.usda.gov/complaint_filing_cust or at any USDA office, or call (866)6329992 to request the form. You may also write a letter containing all of the information requested in the form. Send your completed complaint form or letter to us by mail at U.S. Department of Agriculture, Director, Office of Adjudication, 1400 Independence Avenue, S.W., Washington, D.C. 202509410, by fax (202)6907442 or email at program.intake@usda.gov. Individuals who are deaf, hard of hearing or have speech disabilities may contact USDA through the Federal Relay Service at (800)8778339; or (800)8456136 (Spanish). USDA Child Nutrition Programs recognize the following protected classes: race, color, national origin, sex, age & disability. USDA is an equal opportunity employer.



WHAT ABOUT BIRTHDAYS?

Please ask your child's teacher or Site Director to find out how birthdays are celebrated at your center.

Giraffe Laugh is a **PEANUT AND TREE NUT FREE ENVIRONMENT**, so please do not bring any snacks that have peanuts or tree nuts in them or are produced in a plant with either peanuts or tree nuts. Celebrations such as Halloween, Easter and other celebrations are crucial times to protect kids with severe allergies. Nut allergies are VERY common now, and VERY serious! Please always assume that there may be at least one child with a severe allergy in any classroom at any given time!

WHAT IF MY CHILD IS NOT POTTY TRAINED?

We are happy to assist you when you feel your child is ready for potty training. We advise you to wait until they are having a lot of success at home then we ask you to provide plenty of changes of clothes. We do not recommend Pullups (except perhaps at nap time) as they do not provide the same awareness of wetness that training pants or underwear do.

We do not shame, scold or otherwise embarrass the child when they have accidents. Accidents are to be expected and are part of the learning process. If it appears your child is having little success at the center, we may request that he/she returns to diapers (or Pullups) until they feel more confident using the potty at school. We treat accidents in a matter-of-fact way and often allow the child to change their own clothing, making the process a tedious one that takes away from their playtime, therefore, reinforcing the benefits of using the potty!

HOW CAN I: Be involved as a parent; Keep up with what is going on at Giraffe Laugh & Can I visit my child?

We WELCOME and EXPECT parent involvement in several ways at Giraffe Laugh Early Learning Centers. There are many regularly scheduled events that parents and other family members (i.e. siblings, grandparents, etc.) may attend. *(Also see field trips)*

We ask all families to contribute 20 hours of volunteer time each year. We feel it is vital to your child's success at our school to see you involved and a part of such an important part of their day. You can also ask other family members, neighbors, friends, or professionals to help in some way and this will go toward your family's 20 hours. We track that information all year long. ***There is a contest each year, and the family with the most hours gets a free week of childcare equivalent to their normal schedule!***

Each location has a bulletin board or area designed specifically for parents. Each month the boards are updated to include activities that are going on within your child's center or within the organization as a whole. Please read the weekly emails sent out by your Site Director, as they nearly always have something for volunteers to do.

These activities do not always require that you be here during the day or require that you miss work.



Please look carefully for ways that you can become involved, and if you have an idea of your own, please tell us, we want you to be a part of your child's education more than anyone else in the world! You can find information on our website www.giraffelaugh.org, on Facebook, Instagram, Linked In, Pinterest and X (formerly known as Twitter). Please "like" us and/or follow us on social media for updated information and feel free to share our updates with others. We also use www.signupgenius.com so that people can sign up for events and volunteer opportunities. One of the best ways to stay up to date at your child's center is to read the weekly emails sent out by the Site Directors.

We encourage parents to visit and stay at the center as many times as needed before you leave your child for the first day. This will increase both your and your child's comfort level and familiarize you both with routines.

Parents are welcome to join their child for lunch or breastfeeding or any other time of the day. We only ask that if you tell your child you will come during the day that you do, and please do not arrive at nap time (12:30 p.m.). It is more difficult for children to separate from their parents when they are tired.

DOES GIRAFFE LAUGH TAKE FIELD TRIPS?

There are a few annual trips that are standard for us such as the annual Halloween Parade, a trip to the Pumpkin Patch and a trip to the Zoo. Most field trips will be announced in advance but occasionally an opportunity will arise last minute that is too good to pass up.

Giraffe Laugh has two vans to transport children, and we provide booster seats for most of the children. If your child weighs less than 39 pounds and thus is required to use a car seat, please label it and leave it at the center for field-trip day. Children must be six years or older to be out of a car seat or booster. Seat belts are always used on all children. Please sign the transportation policy form.

There is sometimes a minimal cost for these field trips, if this should be a burden, please notify your Site Director. If you are able to pay for someone who cannot, please also notify the Site Director. No child will be unable to attend a field trip due to inability to pay. We follow the **Idaho Child (Car Seat) Restraint Law**:

[Idaho Code 49-672](#) Idaho's Child Passenger Safety Law will require that all children 6 years of age or younger be properly restrained in an appropriate child safety restraint. This law was current through the 2023 Legislative Session.

An appropriate child restraint is a child safety seat for children up to 40 lbs and a belt positioning booster seat for children 6 yrs or younger. Lap belt only seating positions should not be used with a booster seat.

Parents and teachers must provide proof of insurance and a copy of their license if they drive anyone beside their own child. All parents or volunteers transporting children other than their own will be accompanied by a staff member.



DOES GIRAFFE LAUGH HAVE ANY EXTRACURRICULAR ACTIVITIES?

Yes! Your child can participate in activities each year depending on the site and season. Some examples include: swim lessons in the summer months, gymnastics or ballet with Ballet Idaho during the winter months with an occasional different activity offered as they become available. Parents pay for these services if they are able to, and scholarships are available to those that cannot so that all children will participate if desired. They must meet the age requirements and any other restrictions, such as being potty trained.

HOW ELSE CAN I BE INVOLVED IN CENTER ACTIVITIES?

Because we are a nonprofit, a portion of our annual budget is generated through fundraising activities and events. If you have ideas, resources and/or the time to help in this area, we are more than happy to utilize your expertise. Occasionally, there are projects that we cannot hire “professionals” to do, therefore, we look to the parents to assist us with special projects such as yard improvements, playground equipment improvements, building improvements, etc. If you have any special trades that you are willing to share, we are always anxious to use your skills!

If you will be volunteering regularly with children on a scheduled basis, you will be required to take First Aid and CPR and obtain a volunteer license through the City of Boise.

PRESCHOOL HOURS AND PROGRAM

The preschool hours are from 9:30 a.m. to 12:30 p.m. Your child will need to be on time. Preschool is very child oriented and child led. It involves an established curriculum for each week coupled with a flexibility to allow for the children’s own curiosity and the development of the interests surrounding the themes.

A basic schedule is as follows: breakfast is provided then followed by circle time, activity time, cleanup time, outdoor time, lunchtime then free play. They will, however, come home with thoughts, ideas and experiences that build on previous and future learning.

Our primary goal is to prepare children for kindergarten by ensuring school readiness! Our focus is on integrating S.T.E.M. (Science. Technology. Engineering. Math); S.T.E.A.M. (the additional “A” = Art) & S.T.R.E.A.M. (the additional “R” = Reading) as well as social/emotional skills and development.

What is a STEM Education? Integrating the STEM subjects (science, technology, engineering and mathematics) may seem daunting, but at least they’re congruent. It is not hard for our brains to make the leap between the knowledge needed to teach in these areas.

What is a STEAM Education? What happens when you add in the A for art? You have STEAM, which gives STEM a whole new look and feel. Suddenly, a hands-on activity includes artistic ventures. This can allow students who don’t feel scientifically or mathematically inclined to feel more comfortable representing their knowledge.



What is a STREAM Education? Add in the R for reading and now you have STREAM, a multidisciplinary approach that starts to look like good, cross-curricular teaching.

Source: <https://edtechmagazine.com/k12/article/2017/08/history-stem-vs-steam-education-and-rise-stream>

Children will gain necessary skills for kindergarten readiness including:

- **S: Science:** Elements of nature are explored and the basic skills of a scientist; observing, predicting and hypothesizing are all a part of learning to love discovery. Classroom pets often exist to enrich the learning environment.
- **T: Technology:** We include implementation of coding and limited screen time to foster learning. Coding games that are age appropriate are included, and patterning, which leads to coding skills in later life.
- **R: Reading, i.e. Literacy:** Recognizing letters, the sounds they make, enjoying reading and being read to, learning to write their name and creating their own books. Giraffe Laugh uses Zoo Phonics to nurture these skills. Additionally, books, puzzles and writing materials are always available.
- **E: Engineering:** The work of children is play, and construction and engineering are an important part of their work. All of our locations have a variety of building and constructing materials to help initiate the innate desire and need to build. Unit Blocks are a part of every classroom above the age of two and soft blocks are available for infants.
- **A: Art, i.e. Creativity:** Guided art experiences are provided for creativity and expression, and materials are available for children to explore at will. Process is emphasized over product. Colors and how they are made along with experimenting with different mediums is emphasized.
- **M: Math:** Recognizing numerals, adding using concrete materials and fractions through block play. Counting activities and understanding 1:1 correspondence along with measurement, volume and an understanding of size and shapes.

Your child will also have opportunities to enhance their:

- **Social Skills:** Learning to make a friend, stand in line, take turns, express feelings and sit in circle time are all social skills that children learn in the preschool years. Giraffe Laugh uses the Second Step Curriculum to help children recognize their own feelings and those of others. Dramatic play areas are included to nurture their cooperation skills and creative thinking skills.
- **Safety:** Giraffe Laugh uses the Talking About Touching Curriculum from the Committee for Children. These guidelines are meant to keep children safe in all areas and covers everything from crossing the street to inappropriate touch. This has a parent component that is critical to its success. This is offered one or two times per year.



SCHOOL AGE SUMMER PROGRAM HOURS AND PROGRAM:

The Giraffe Laugh Summer Program (GLSP) is available to all children entering kindergarten through those entering 6th grade. Hours are: 7:30 a.m. - 5:30 p.m. The GLSP is unique in the aspect that younger school aged children are exposed to summer day camp activities that their older peers have been able to participate in for years in the Treasure Valley. We have fun, age-appropriate activities as well as field trips. Every summer we have a variety of field trips that are educational, fun for the kids and we try to incorporate different field trip locations every summer so each year is new and fun! We also stick to the tried-and-true trips that the kids love and look forward to every year.

Our main goal at the GLSP is to bridge the summer learning gap without compromising the fun that kids should be having in the summer!

As school age children grow and learn throughout their time at Giraffe Laugh our goal will be to provide, mentor and teach leadership attributes that will help them become more self-confident. Ultimately, this will help them become community leaders and advocates for a better future.

Our preschool graduates do not automatically move on from our traditional preschool setting to our School Age Summer Program. Space needs to be available and all accounts must have a \$0 balance. Preschool graduation happens at the end of May/early June and it typically coincides with the Boise School District calendar.



HOW ARE ILLNESSES HANDLED?

When should your child stay home?

A great rule of thumb is to consider whether or not you would want your child in contact with another child who is exhibiting the same symptoms your child has. While it is disappointing for kids to miss school, we know that sick children are best consoled by their own parents or caregivers. We appreciate your efforts to keep your GL center community healthy and happy!!

Children cannot attend GL if any of the following conditions are present:

- Fever: A fever of 100.4 degrees or greater: The child MUST BE without fever for a full 24 hours without medication before returning to GL.
- Vomiting: The child may not return until these symptoms have subsided for a full 24 hours.
- Diarrhea: (two or more bowel movements that are atypical (“explosive,” etc.) for the child indicate the possibility of infectious diarrhea so a parent will be called; one extremely loose stool may result in an immediate call to parents): The child may not return until these symptoms have subsided for a full 24 hours. In case of Rotavirus outbreak, we may require a 48-hour symptom-free time frame.
- Bacterial infections: The child must be on antibiotics for a **minimum** of 24 hours, or have a physician’s clearance before returning.
- Rashes: Generalized rashes require a physician’s clearance to return.
- Chicken Pox: Children must stay home until sores are dry (one week).
- Head lice or Scabies: Children must be nit-free to return. A staff member will inspect the child’s head prior to readmission.
- Listless, lethargic behavior, lack of appetite, refusal to eat or drink, and extreme irritability: Clearly, unusual behavior for a child that persists over time indicates the likelihood of oncoming illness. You may receive a call if your child exhibits this kind of behavior because it is an indication that illness is approaching.
- Nasal Discharge (green) or Respiratory Distress: Parents will be called if a child exhibits ongoing discharge lasting longer than a few days, especially if accompanied by a fever.
- Persistent cough, eye drainage or ear pain will result in a parent phone call.
- Pink Eye: Though this condition is seldom serious, it is highly contagious and can spread quickly with young children. We ask that children not return until they have been treated and/or the eye is not draining.
- Surgical procedures: Our policy is that any child undergoing general anesthesia must be out of the program for the entire day of the procedure, and an additional 24 hours to ensure complete recovery.

Even with a doctor's note, we reserve the right to deny readmittance to care until our qualifications are met. Siblings of ill students are encouraged to remain home during the time the child is excluded from care to prevent transmission within the center.

You are required to pick up your child within 60 minutes of notification regarding an illness. If you cannot be reached, then your emergency contact(s) will be called. We reserve the right to determine when a child should be sent home due to illness.



WHAT IF MY CHILD NEEDS MEDICATION?

If your child needs medication during their stay at GL, parents will need to write and sign a permission slip for them to receive the medicine. Medicine permission slips can be obtained from your child's teacher or Site Director. Medication name, dosage and time to be given must be indicated.

You may request a separate medication container for childcare/school from your pharmacist. This way you don't have to remember to take the medication home each evening and it ensures your child's medicine is always available to help speed their recovery. **DO NOT LEAVE MEDICINE IN YOUR CHILD'S BAG** where another child might find it! Please always give it to a teacher to put in a safe place.

Non-prescription drugs must also be written down for Giraffe Laugh to administer them to your child, including Neosporin and other topical creams.

HOW ARE ACCIDENTS HANDLED?

All staff are required to have current Infant CPR and First Aid certification. In the case of a serious accident or injury, we will make every effort to contact the child's parents first. It is very important to have someone else we can contact in case of an emergency with current phone numbers on your child's registration form. It is also important for you to leave the number where you can be reached each day on the daily sign in sheet. If an adult is not available outside of the center to care for the child, the child's doctor or an ambulance may be called if necessary. If needed, we will transport your child to the hospital of your choice or the nearest hospital if you have not indicated a choice in your paperwork.

Your child's teacher will fill out an incident report regarding the incident/accident that will need to be signed and returned so that we have a record. You may ask for a copy if you would like one.

HOW DO I KNOW WHAT IS HAPPENING AT GIRAFFE LAUGH?

Site directors send out a weekly email to inform parents about upcoming events and information. Sometimes we cannot anticipate all information in advance so please pay close attention to notes on the entrance door or by the sign-in sheet. Additionally, important notices may be placed in your mailbox.

Please also Like or Follow us on Facebook, X, Pinterest, Instagram and Linked In. Whatever social network you use, you can find us there. We will also do quarterly postings on our website to keep parents informed. Our Administrative Office may, from time to time, send you email notices as well about important things coming up.

HOW CAN I LEARN MORE ABOUT MY CHILD'S DEVELOPMENT?

GL offers annual parent/teacher conferences in the fall to connect with parents regarding each child's development and progress in our school. Conferences give us special time together to learn more about your child from the expert...YOU! We spend many months compiling information about your child so that we can learn more about their development and we're excited to share information as well as partner



with parents in accomplishing your goals. The tools the teaching staff use are ELAP, Creative Curriculum, Teaching Strategies Gold. *Parents* utilize the Ages & Stages Questionnaire to fill in the gaps that the teaching and leadership staff might miss.

Ages and Stages Questionnaire (ASQ) Policy

Giraffe Laugh uses the Ages & Stages Questionnaire screening tool to identify where a child is developmentally at the time the tool is used. 60 days after your child enrolls at GL, parents will receive a link via email to our ASQ-3 site. The ASQ will need to be filled out within 7 days. Thereafter, screening will proceed with the next regularly scheduled screening date, along with classroom assessments provided to each family during parent teacher conferences.

The ASQ Questionnaire is a parent-driven tool and your permission is required. Parents are their child's first teachers and as such, parents know their child the best. (We encourage all families to sign the permission form and to participate in the ASQ. Utilizing the ASQ assessment tool is beneficial to lifelong academic success.) The parents and site director will be sent a summary page with the results of the questionnaire. If you (the parent) do not have access to a computer or the Internet, GL can help you access the questionnaire.

We will then set up a time in the next week to 10 days to go over the results in person or over Zoom. The benefits of this assessment tool are that staff can identify areas in our curriculum that may need improvement and if a child may need additional support in a specific area of development. Only leadership staff (including Site Director's, Assistant Site Director and/or Lead Teachers) will conference with parents on this confidential information for their child.

The ASQ is a guide to help determine whether a child is developing on schedule and assists parents and teachers to identify specific areas where support may be needed. The ASQ provides general information regarding developmental milestones; it does not diagnose delays or disabilities.

Screening results can be shared with a child's primary health care provider or other community agencies upon parents' written consent.

The ASQ is designed to help all children be successful, and Giraffe Laugh believes that each child is a unique and capable learner. If a concern exists, your Site Director will provide you with necessary information to seek outside resources and services.

Meeting times are flexible and available frequently, therefore our hope is that every parent can make it to this important informational meeting about your child(ren)! If you have any concerns throughout the year, please consult with your child's teacher and they can conduct an assessment if necessary.

In regard to your child's day and/or progress please feel free to contact the Site Director or talk to your child's teacher personally to get the information you need. We appreciate your input, and it helps us to better understand your child's needs. Please keep us informed of how we can better serve you and your child. *When we all work together on behalf of your child we can't lose.*



LICENSING AND STAFFING

No staff member is allowed to care for children outside of normal business hours, so please do not ask them to babysit after hours.

Depending on the location, Giraffe Laugh Early Learning Centers are licensed by the City of Boise or the State of Idaho. Giraffe Laugh operates to meet or exceed all regulations regarding adult/child ratios, health and safety precautions, procedure, nutrition, and record keeping. We meet all guidelines established by the Idaho Child Care Program and accept clients on this program. Additionally, we meet all standards as described in the Healthy Child Care Initiative by the City of Boise. Giraffe Laugh is a part of a voluntary program through IdahoSTARS called Steps To Quality.

All Giraffe Laugh staff members are licensed by the City of Boise as Child Care Providers &/or through the State of Idaho. All have been fingerprinted and had a background check. At all times a staff member is present who has been trained in First Aid and CPR. All staff regularly participate in in-service training and Essential Training provided by IdahoSTARS.

We ask that all teachers enroll in the Professional Development program through IdahoSTARS. The purpose of this program is to further the education and level of professionalism of the wonderful people who shape the lives of your children on a daily basis. Several of our teachers are on an academic scholarship to acquire more education.

PARENTING CLASSES:

Parenting classes are available to all parents, guardians and family members. Most are at no charge to the attendees. All families are encouraged to attend as many courses as possible. Examples of some classes you may see offered include: Strengthening Families, Love and Logic, and Cooking Matters through the Idaho Foodbank. Check for information about classes in emails or via social media.

WHAT IS GIRAFFE LAUGHS POLICY ON CHILD ABUSE, NEGLECT & SEXUAL ABUSE?

While it is rare that children are abused or neglected, it is a reality in our community. In an effort to prevent child abuse and neglect, Giraffe Laugh personnel are required to participate in a training (Care Enough to Call) at least once per year, which addresses strategies for preventing abuse and neglect, including sexual abuse.

Recognition of abuse and/or neglect is vital to the safety of all children in our care and in our community. We adhere to the Idaho Code as follows:

Idaho Code, Section 16-1605: requires all childcare personnel to report any indication of child abuse. We are obligated by law to inform the Child Protection Offices of the Department of Health and Welfare within twenty four (24) hours of any conditions or circumstances which would reasonably result in physical injury to a child. Persons who act upon reasonable cause in reporting child abuse are protected from any liability by Idaho Code, Sec 16-1606.

Everyone is required to report suspected abuse, not just teachers. Please call 211 if you suspect a child is being abused or neglected. Your identity can remain confidential and it is our collective responsibility to ensure safety for children in all areas of their lives.



BEHAVIORAL GUIDANCE POLICY AT GIRAFFE LAUGH EARLY LEARNING CENTERS:

It is our intent to provide a safe environment for all participants in our program. We make every attempt to work with each child and family to foster positive behavior that helps every child feel successful.

Our focus is on positive behaviors. When a parent arrives, we will always focus on the positive aspects of your child's day especially if the child is within earshot. This reinforces the concept that adults will focus on appropriate behavior as opposed to negative. Please do not attempt to discuss inappropriate behaviors with your child present. You are welcome to talk to your child's teacher over the phone or via email

When unacceptable behavior occurs, the child is spoken to gently but firmly regarding the inappropriate behavior. Words are chosen carefully and a positive tone of voice is used in order to help the child feel confident and reassured rather than guilty and ashamed. Desirable alternative behaviors are taught as they are offered to the child as options for appropriate behavior. *The purpose of behavioral guidance is to help children develop self-control and to become responsible for their own behavior. Knowing what behavior is appropriate or acceptable in a situation is an important skill.* We are committed to helping children learn to express feelings appropriately, to consider other people's feelings, and to negotiate their own conflicts.

Redirection of activity is also used when possible. For more serious or continuing misbehavior, a child may be removed from the group for a brief timeaway period. If this occurs the child has the opportunity to do a quiet, solitary activity such as reading a book or doing a puzzle, in this way it allows the child to be separate from their classmates and to be successful in an activity before returning to the group. Conflict resolution and language building occurs to help children with the nuances of social skills while building the vocabulary that is key to positive interactions with one another.

Teachers like to work closely with families to understand each child and to determine which methods work best for each individual child, thus, teamwork/partnering with families is very important.

CHALLENGING BEHAVIORS

A challenging behavior is any behavior that interferes with children's learning, development and success at play and is harmful to the child, other children or adults. Examples of challenging behaviors include but are not limited to: hitting, headbutting, biting, scratching, screaming, spitting, punching, kicking, throwing objects, breaking classroom materials, use of any object or body part with intent to cause physical harm. These behaviors can occur in the classroom, playground, on field trips or any form of transportation.

Challenging behavior is addressed first through teacher observations. It is important to identify events, activities, interactions, and other contextual factors that predict and may contribute to the child's use of challenging behavior. After the function of the child's behavior is assessed, positive & supportive strategies are then put into effect in the classroom.

If a child exhibits continually challenging, disruptive and/or unsafe behavior that is not resolved through appropriate behavior management strategies, the teachers will discuss the situation with a Site Director, family and/or other professionals to develop an individualized action plan that supports the child's inclusion and success. All reasonable attempts will be made to work with the child and the family to resolve the behavior problem. Staff will keep families informed of the progress made. Referrals to community resources or an outside evaluation may be suggested.

SUSPENSION AND EXPULSION

Our goal is to be inclusive for all children in our program and to limit suspension, expulsion and other exclusionary measures. Suspension and/or expulsion are only used when all reasonable attempts, as outlined above, have been exhausted. GL reserves the right to limit, deny, or suspend a child from the center when the health and/or safety of the individual, other children, or staff is in jeopardy. Decisions of this nature will be based on the following behavioral criteria:

- 1) Repeated & unresolved behavioral situations requiring staff to intervene & take time away from the rest of the children.
- 2) Failure on a guardian's part to follow through on referrals to community resources and/or lack of support for the behavioral strategies developed by the Giraffe Laugh teaching staff.

Once all interventions have been exhausted, to the best of our ability, and it is in the best interest of the child, suspension and expulsion will occur. ***Our policy complies with federal and civil rights laws***



WHAT IS GIRAFFE LAUGH'S DIVERSITY AND INCLUSION POLICY?

Vision

It is the intent of Giraffe Laugh to build a diverse and inclusive staff and Board of Directors that accurately reflects the families we serve in order to achieve an enriched and equitable learning environment for children and employees of Giraffe Laugh.

This requires that all employees dedicate themselves to creating an inclusive and respectful work and play environment. Supervisory incumbents must reflect diverse backgrounds and possess competencies that are sensitive to diversity and inclusiveness. Our Supervisors must lead and manage an engaged workforce and create an environment of care and inclusion for all of our children and families.

We aspire to provide every child with the opportunity to interact with, and learn from, people of all walks of life. We have a goal of inspiring well-rounded children who accept others for their differences, as well as their similarities. We envision a staff and Board of Directors that reflect the diversity of the community we serve in order to better empathize, support and anticipate the variety of needs of our families.

Mission

Diversity is a priority at Giraffe Laugh Early Learning Center as a part of its mission to ensure school readiness, empower families, and build strong futures for all children and their families in the Treasure Valley. We value the importance of having a diverse constituent base, providing services to families at all income levels and of different backgrounds with the purpose of creating an environment in which children from all experiences can help one another succeed and grow into well-rounded individuals. In addition, we serve family structures of all types including teen parents, homeless parents, single parents, regular and high-income parents, foster parents, and parental guardians. We work to provide a stable and safe space for a child, especially as home life can become tumultuous and/or ever-changing.

To serve a wide base of needs successfully, it is important that the Giraffe Laugh staff and Board of Directors reflect the diversity that we treasure in our stakeholders. Our staff currently consists of many different ethnicities, ages, incomes, religions, and areas of expertise with one common thread: a passion for early childhood education to prepare our Giraffe Laugh children for success in the future.

WHAT DAYS DOES GIRAFFE LAUGH CLOSE?

HOLIDAYS:

GL is closed during the following holidays: Memorial Day, Fourth of July, Labor Day, Thanksgiving Day & Black Friday, we close at 3pm on Christmas Eve and all centers are closed from December 25th-January 1st (centers will be open regular hours on January 2nd - Unless the 2nd falls on a weekend). Garden City Preschool has additional closures; info about this can be found in their parent handbook.

You may opt to use your vacation credits for these days by simply leaving a note with your payment requesting a credit from the Site Director. If the holiday mentioned occurs on a weekend, the center will be closed either the Friday before or the Monday after the holiday. This will be announced in the relevant years with plenty of advance notice.



SNOW DAY CLOSURE POLICY:

In the event of severe weather conditions, please be aware that the centers may be closed for the day or temporarily. We ask parents to watch the news, social media networks or listen to your favorite radio program to listen for Boise School District school closures. The Boise School District RARELY closes unless the roads are determined to be extremely unsafe. They have enormous resources and people to make this determination. Trusting that their goal of keeping children safe is equal to our own, we will treat school closures in the following way:

1. If the Boise School District declares a “snow day” or “severe weather day” and closes school for the day, Giraffe Laugh will also be closed.
2. However, we will consider a late opening at 10:00 a.m. so that the majority of people have traveled and the chances of higher temperatures and/or better road conditions are improved.
 - a. Please check your email and social media for updates.
3. If the Boise School District is not in session (i.e. Thanksgiving Break or Christmas Break), Giraffe Laugh will make its own determination.

Please check your local news and our Facebook page for updated information!

WHAT IF I NEED HELP WITH A RESOURCE THAT GIRAFFE LAUGH DOES NOT OFFER?

Self Rescue Manual- Any family needing services that GL does not offer, can find a list of outside resources, located in the Self Rescue Manual. These manuals are located at all centers in the administrative offices. If this manual does not have the resources you need or are looking for there are also other lists of outside resources including the community resource list.

The Self Rescue Manual includes resources pertaining to clothing and furniture, counseling and mental health services, dental services, education, employment, financial and utility assistance, food pantries, crisis assistance hot-lines, housing assistance, legal assistance, medical assistance, substance abuse treatment, support groups, transportation and vision services. Website:
<https://bcacha.org/wp-content/uploads/2018/08/Boise-Self-Rescue-Manual.pdf>

Findhelp Idaho - Findhelp's network connects people *seeking* help and verified social care organizations that serve them; thousands of nonprofits and social care organizations serve our communities. But for most people, navigating the system to get help has been difficult, time consuming, and frustrating. Too many Americans are suffering, and they don't need to.

Findhelp created a social care network that connects people and programs — making it easy for people to find social services in their communities. Your GL Site Director is happy to help connect you with needed services via the FindhelpIdaho website.

2-1-1 Idaho CareLine - The 2-1-1 Idaho CareLine is a free, statewide community information and referral service through the Idaho Department of Health and Welfare. The comprehensive database includes programs that offer free or low-cost health and human services or social services.

If you have any other questions pertaining to you or your family's need for services not mentioned here, please feel free to contact the Site Director of the centers for more information.



CONGRATULATIONS!

You, like many other parents, have chosen a quality early childhood center for your child and we congratulate you on your choice! Please keep us informed on how we can continue caring for you and yours and how we can address your concerns and care for your family.

It is our goal to ensure school readiness, empower families and to build strong futures. Please let us know how we can help you do that with your family.

We Can See The Future From Here!!

Forms to be filled out &/or signed by parents:

- Child and Adult Care Food Program (CACFP)
- Parent Code of Conduct
- Payment Contract
- Booster Seat Waiver
- Intake Form
- Media and Public Release
- Help us know your child
- Sunscreen Policy
- Parent Manual Signature
- Voluntary Disclosure
- Emergency and I.D. Information
- Confidentiality Form
- Infant Safe Sleep Practices

Addendum:

Infant Safe Sleep - Idaho Maternal & Child Health (Idaho Dept. of Health & Welfare)

I have read & understand the content of the Giraffe Laugh Early Learning Centers Parent Manual.

Parent Name: Printed Parent Name: Signature

Child's Name Date

Please return this form to your child's Site Director



Share the room, not the bed

Keep baby's sleep area in the same room where you sleep for the first 6 months or, ideally, for the first year. Place your baby's crib, bassinet, portable crib, or play yard in your bedroom, close to your bed. The American Academy of Pediatrics recommends room sharing because it can decrease the risk of SIDS by as much as 50% and is much safer than bed sharing. In addition, room sharing will make it easier for you to feed, comfort, and watch your baby.

Before using a crib for the first time:

- Check to see if it meets safety standards by visiting www.CPSC.gov.
- Check to see if it has been recalled at www.recalls.gov.

If you swaddle your baby, do so safely. Make sure that the baby is always on his or her back when swaddled. The swaddle should not be too tight, weighted, or make it hard for the baby to breathe or move his or her hips. When your baby is old enough to start trying to roll over, you should stop swaddling.

Other ways to keep babies safe and reduce the risk of SUID/SIDS

No one should smoke or use nicotine products around your baby

- Idaho Quit line: 1-800-QUIT-NOW

Breastfeed your baby

- WIC.dhwidaho.gov
- Breastfeeding Helpline: 1-800-994-9662

Immunize your baby

- immunizeidaho.org
- Talk with your baby's pediatrician

Get help if anyone who cares for your baby is using drugs or alcohol

- Idaho Substance Use Disorder Services: 1-800-922-3406
- Idaho Careline: 2-1-1

Other Resources

- National Domestic Violence hotline: 1-800-799-7233

Home Visiting - Scan Here



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INFANT SAFE SLEEP



Idaho
maternal & child health

SUID/SIDS and Safe Sleep

Sudden Unexpected Infant Death (SUID) is the death of an infant under the age of one year that occurs suddenly and unexpectedly. SUID includes deaths due to a known cause, such as accidental suffocation, as well as deaths due to Sudden Infant Death Syndrome (SIDS) in which the cause is unknown even after investigation. A safe sleep environment can reduce the risk of SUID and SIDS.

SUID is a leading cause of death for infants.

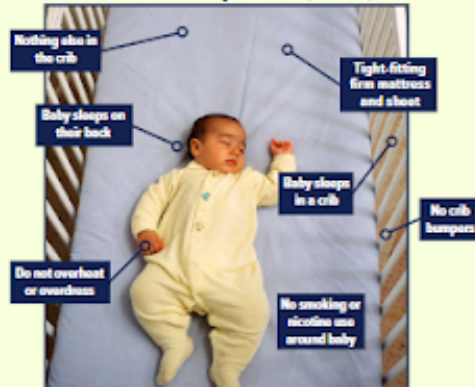
Parents and caregivers should practice safe sleep recommendations during all sleep times, including naps. If baby falls asleep in a car seat, swing, stroller, or infant carrier, move baby to a safe sleep surface as soon as possible. Let grandparents, babysitters, child care providers, and friends know about the safest way for your baby to sleep.

For more information on Safe Sleep scan here



Please Buckle Out
Every Nap
Every Night

ABC's of Safe Sleep: Alone, Back, Crib



- **Alone** - Babies should sleep by themselves in a crib or bassinet. If you breastfeed in bed, always return baby to their crib after nursing.
- **Back** - Always put babies to sleep on their back, even when they can roll over.
- **Crib** - Always place baby in an empty, firm, flat, non-inclined, crib or bassinet that meets safety standards and is free of blankets, pillows, and other soft items.
- Do not overheat your baby. Dress your baby in lightweight sleep clothing, like a sleep sack. Keep baby's head and face uncovered during all sleep times.
- Try giving a pacifier at nap time and bedtime. This helps reduce the risk of SIDS, even if it falls out after the baby is asleep. *Remember to wait to use one until breastfeeding is well-established.*
- Give baby plenty of tummy time when baby is awake and supervised.
- Avoid heart and breathing monitors as your main way to reduce the risk of SIDS.

