



Welcome

Dear Family,

This Family Handbook is a working document.

It provides information about policies set by the board and procedures implemented by the director and staff all within the confines of Rules and Regulations set by the State Department of Human Services.

The intention is to help parents to be knowledgeable about how the school functions and to better understand the reasons behind the rules and regulations.

We welcome your questions and any suggestions for increased clarity. We hope this document provides you the needed guidance.

Thank you for choosing Growing Years School. We look forward to providing your child with a caring and enriching environment.

Sincerely,

Adele Melnick

Director

growingyears@sopris.net; (970) 927 8008

Growing Years School

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Family Handbook

History

Growing Years School (GYS) was founded in 1988 by Chalmers Morse and Gail Dahling. Their vision was to provide a school in a residential community to serve the needs of local families. In 1998, Growing Years incorporated as a not-for-profit organization.

Vision Statement

We envision a world of children who are self-confident, self-disciplined, and enthusiastic about learning.

Philosophy

GYS exemplifies a high-quality, developmentally oriented program, delineating the best knowledge about how children grow and learn, providing for each child individually. In recognition that the arts are a basis of intellectual development, the program is rich in music, movement, visual and literary arts, and covers the rudiments of all disciplines from “astronomy to zoology.”

GYS is a school where a child can become self-confident and self-disciplined; where the child's individual talents and strengths are developed; where home and school cooperate; and where staff is open to learning, using observation and non-judgmental recording as a basis for program planning, implementation and assessment.

Goal

The goal at GYS is to help young children make sense of the world. The intention is to provide a safe and comfortable environment that creates an enthusiasm for learning, while developing good citizens.

Hours of Operation

GYS is open year round- Monday-Friday from 7:30AM-5:15PM. It is closed for legal holidays, teacher in-service, and a week between Christmas and New Year's. Please reference our school calendar on our website or on Brightwheel for scheduled closures.

We also follow RE-1 closures for weather, emergencies & illnesses. Information about closures will be sent via Brightwheel. You can also contact our local school district snowline at: (970) 384 6075 if the weather is in question. If it becomes necessary to close early, we will contact you or your emergency contacts as soon as possible. Your child's early pick-up is your responsibility to arrange.

Programs and Child to Staff Ratios

GYS is a licensed childcare center (Add our license number here) for children between the ages of 6 weeks to 6 years old, with classrooms in two nearby locations. The Infant Center that is licensed for 6 weeks up to 2 years old located at 151 School Street in Basalt and our Preschool that is licensed for 1 year to 6 years old is located at 151 Cottonwood Dr. in Basalt.

There are five classrooms offered at GYS. We follow the NAEYC guidelines for group size and staff ratios. Children are supervised at all times and all caregivers receive scheduled breaks which reduce fatigue and help to ensure alertness.

We constantly look at ways to improve and lower our group size to improve our adult to child ratios. On staff we have a floater teacher who helps us maintain group and ratio size. Below you will find the State of Colorado child/staff ratios and group size as well the NAEYC guidelines.

Room	Age	Ratio (Staff:Child)	Our max classroom size
Infant Room	6 weeks-18 months	1:3	9
Waddler	12 months-24 months	1:5	10
Toddler	24 months-36 months	1:5	10
Preschool	2.5 years-4 years	1:10	15
Pre-K	3.5 years-6 years old	1:12	19

Primary Caregiving & Continuity of Care Practices

Each child in our center is cared for by the same one or at least two teachers on a daily basis to promote formation for a strong bond. Children in our school stay with the same primary caregiver in the same peer group for at least two years depending on enrollment date.

Grouping

GYS serves two age groups prescribed by licensing agreements. Multi-age grouping within each classroom is consistent with GYS philosophy, as listed below:

- Multi-age grouping provides a natural, familiar setting. In this age of small families; children learn about the complexities of living together in an atmosphere that begins to make sense.
- Teaching is a wonderful way of learning—older children, in essence, become the teachers of the younger ones as they gain confidence in their own competence. It's wonderful to be the top dog even if only for a little while.
- Interaction among children, across a span of several years, provides an opportunity for them to learn about each other's stages of development. The younger children begin to aspire to things they will be able to do, as they grow older. The older children begin to deepen their insights about what they did when they were little.
- Older children begin to take responsibility for the care and safety of younger children, a most important thing to learn in preparation for future parenthood, career teaching, and life. They begin to gain a sense of humor as they observe funny things young children do, which seem nonsensical, but they also get ideas as they watch the spontaneous, less-inhibited actions on which younger children embark, things the older children have learned to be cautious about.
- Research has shown consistently that all intellectual development is based on sound social-emotional development. But learning is also intellectual. Older children begin to put things in perspective, which is the beginning of logic and reasoning.

Governance and Certification

GYS is a licensed childcare center under two license numbers. License numbers: 1689630 for the Redbrick building and 102287 for the infant/waddler building.

Governance of the school falls under a Board of Directors that consist mostly of parents whose children are enrolled in our program. They welcome recommendations from parents. GYS is incorporated under Colorado law. It is administered by a director and qualified early childhood staff. All Board meetings except executive sessions are open to the public.

Checklist for Enrollment

Every family is required to make an introductory visit to the school prior to enrollment. Parents are urged to get acquainted with the program to be sure that GYS is the right place for their child.

- Enrollment application
- Emergency contacts and authorization form releasing child to another adult(s);
- Annual immunization forms, including Statement of health signed by physician
- Authorization for emergency care; updated annually
- Copy of Driver's license
- Payment contract

Enrollment Records

Each fall, GYS completes an audit of enrollment records. At the conclusion of this audit, families will be notified if anything needs to be updated. Some forms must be updated every year, including the Emergency Contact and Medical Consent form.

Other records must be updated throughout the year, such as physicals and immunization records. When visiting your child's physician for a yearly "well-child" appointment, please request a copy of your child's physical and most recent immunization record.

In addition, any time a family's information changes such as address, place of employment or health insurance provider, a new Emergency Contact and Medical Consent form must be completed for your child's records.

Confidentiality

Confidentiality is a top priority for Growing Years School. Unless we receive your written consent, information regarding your child will not be released with the exception of that required by our regulatory and partnering agencies. All records concerning children at our program are confidential.

When discussing a child's activities and friends in the classroom, only first names will be used. In situations regarding behavior problems and/or Incident/Accident Reports, names of children involved will never be given to families.

Brightwheel is an app used to communicate between parents and staff. All staff can read messages that are sent via Brightwheel. Only communicate information that you don't mind staff reading.

Tuition and Payments

Payment Contracts

Upon enrollment and any changes to tuition, families are provided a Payment Contract. A credit card is required to be on file for any missing payments or balances due. The payment contract states the days and hours your child may be at Growing Years School as well as the amount due.

A refundable deposit of \$250 and a \$50 registration fee will be charged with enrollment. The \$250 will be credited back on your last invoice. This contract should be carefully reviewed and checked for errors.

Payment Schedule

Tuition is invoiced on the 1st and is due no later than the 16th. There is a \$25 late fee per month for payments not initiated on or before the 16th. An invoice will be sent through the Brightwheel app on the 1st of every month and can be paid directly in the app. Payments can also be submitted through the Alpine Bank Portal [here](#).

If you do not receive an invoice on the app, please let us know. You are responsible for contacting the office and ensuring your invoice is paid. There is no deduction for any absences, holidays, or closures due to inclement weather, power outages, or other situations beyond our control. The school's expenses still go on regardless if a child is absent or not.

Late Pick-Up Fee

Parents will be charged \$1 for every minute a child is present after their contracted pick-up time. School closes at 5:15. Teachers will record late fees for processing. The fee will be added to your invoice the following month.

If a call is not received by departure time, then the emergency contact provided will be called. Late pick ups create anxieties in young children which should be avoided. If all else fails, the teacher will stay with the child until an adult arrives to pick up the child.

Insufficient Funds

All payments rejected due to insufficient funds will be charged a \$45 penalty. Missed payments and late fees must be paid within 60 days. Repeated incidents could result in termination of child care services. A payment plan should be discussed with the office if a family is having trouble making tuition payments.

Delinquent Accounts

A \$25 late fee is applied to all past due balances every month until the account is in good standing. Families that are behind in payments more than 60 days without contacting the accountant and setting up a payment arrangement may have their child care services terminated. For information about assistance programs that will help cover the cost of child care tuition, please speak with the director. A payment plan must be agreed upon between family and GYS before an account will be considered "in good standing" and no longer eligible for termination.

Arrival and Departure

Arrival

Drop off outside of the school door, please ring the doorbell if there is not someone there to welcome you. If there is any information you want to share with your child's teacher, please message on Brightwheel. Also, please make sure to scan the QR code on the door using the Brightwheel app to check in your child for the day.

Pick-Up

Parents will scan the QR code on the door using the Brightwheel app and then come into the school with the code provided. Once inside please knock on the classroom door and a staff member will help your child get ready to meet you by the classroom door.

Historically, parents gathering inside the classroom can be disruptive when teachers are still busy with learning activities and providing quality care for children. We ask that parents please don't gather in the classroom room and to keep social conversations with other parents brief until outside the building. This ensures respect for other classrooms with learning in progress, as well as at Camp Chip-a-tooth, with which we share the space.

If children are outside during pickup, parents are still welcome to go inside to see the classroom or special projects a child may be working on.

If someone we are not familiar with is to pick up your child, it is essential that you inform your child's teacher in advance of the pick-up. This person must be listed as an authorized person on the Emergency Contact and Parent Consent form. Remind the authorized person that they may be asked for identification such as a driver's license to ensure your child's safety. Even if the individual has picked up your child before, he or she may still need identification if the teacher in charge has never met them.

If you will be late picking up your child, please provide us with as much notice as possible. Be sure to say goodbye to your child's teachers so they know you are leaving. Once you have reunited with your child and are departing, Growing Years School is no longer responsible for your child. For safety reasons, please do not let your child run ahead of you inside or outside of the building.

Visitors

Pre-pandemic times, Growing Years welcomed parents into the classroom at all times. Now we are transitioning and want to welcome parents back in to volunteer or visit. See **Communication and Family Partnership** below for ideas on how to be involved and schedule time to be in their classroom.

The only exception is the infant room, where parents/guardians are always welcome to nurse or feed their infants.

Attendance

If your child is going to be absent or arrive after 9:30AM, please call us at (970) 927 8008 or send a message via Brightwheel. We will be concerned about your child if we do not hear from you.

If your child will be absent for an extended period of time (more than 2 days), please send a message via Brightwheel of the date the absence begins and the expected date your child will return.

Curriculum, Daily Schedule and Activities

Curriculum

Growing Years School uses Creative Curriculum and Frog Street Curriculum, which supports teachers and caregivers as they create responsive daily routines and meaningful learning experiences for even the youngest learners.

Each program has a Daily Schedule tailored to each age group. A Daily Schedule will be provided of your child's program in the classroom specific classroom information documents.

Outdoor Play

Outdoor play is incorporated into the daily schedule. Children will go outside year-round, including winter. Only during extreme weather conditions will the children remain indoors.

Our teachers refer to the Child Care Weather Watch poster from the Colorado Department of Public Health to determine if it is too hot or cold to play outdoors. Outdoor play will not occur if the outside temperature is greater than 99 °F or less than 36 °F degrees. Additionally, outdoor play will be canceled if the air quality rating is 50 or below.

It is important for parents to send their children in appropriate clothing and outerwear for the weather conditions (e.g., coat, snow pants, boots, gloves, sun hat etc.). Please ask your child's teacher if you have any questions about weather-appropriate clothing.

Nap/Rest time

State regulations require that all children must be provided at least a 20 minute nap or resting time. Naptime schedules vary depending on the classroom. Children will not be forced to sleep, but will be encouraged to lie quietly for the duration. Children in the toddler/preschool/pre-k classrooms who do not fall asleep will be provided alternative quiet activities after 30 minutes.

You will be asked to provide a sheet and blanket for your child to cover the crib/sleeping cots. And depending on the classroom the bedding will either be washed weekly by the school, or sent home to be washed. Children are also encouraged to bring a familiar item, such as a small blanket, from home to use during nap/rest time.

Screen Time

Our normal daily routine does not include any screen time, but from time-to-time, we may use an iPad show as a teaching aid and discussion stimulator. These shows are kept to a minimum.

Personal Items

Personal toys should be left at home. Children want others to see their new acquisitions, but they are crushed if the toy is broken or lost at school. In school everything belongs to everyone. Young children sometimes find it impossible to share something new or treasured. Teachers will communicate when the class will have show and tell and then children may bring in something to share with the group, and then it will be stored in cubbies for safety afterwards. Children are encouraged to share interesting items, such as stories and photographs of family experiences. Books, which can be shared with all the children, are always welcome.

We do not allow children to bring money to school. If there is money that is needed for a field trip or special activity, all funds will be collected by the director from the parent(s)/guardian(s) prior to the field trip and/or special activity.

Guns or other toys, which encourage violent play, are discouraged in the school. Children are not permitted to play with weapons of any type or size or to pretend that other items are weapons, including their fingers, hands, or blocks. Redirection should be used when a child is engaging in weapon or violent play.

Field Trips

Growing Years School offers a variety of experiences both at and away from the center.

Your child may participate in short, unannounced field trips including, but not limited to: walks or buggy rides as a class around the perimeter of the building and/or nearby neighborhoods; trips to local playgrounds; trips to local businesses. During these excursions teacher-child ratios are maintained at all times.

Field trips where students will be transported will require a “Field Trip Permission Form.” Parents will be notified in advance of all field trips requiring a permission form. Parents will also be notified in advance of any trips needing bus or other transportation. Parent volunteers may be sought out for such trips, which require additional transportation. Proper safety procedures are always followed, and parent-volunteer drivers must show a valid driver's license and proof of liability insurance.

If a child is late coming to school on a field trip day, a parent or guardian must stay with the child until the class returns. A sign will be posted to notify parents where the group is so that the child may join the field trip. Children cannot remain at school unless a teacher is present and has accepted responsibility for the child.

Special Activity Fees

Activity fees may be associated with some special activities and field trips that are scheduled in advance. These activities are not mandatory, but parents are responsible for the cost. Please discuss with teachers if you have any questions or concerns.

Nutrition

Food brought from home is permitted under the following conditions:

- Children’s snacks and lunches should be labeled with their name in a lunch box with a cold pack.
- Leftover food may be discarded except for foods that do not require refrigeration and/or come in a commercially-wrapped package that was never opened.
- Children will not be allowed to share food provided by the child’s family unless the food is intended for sharing with all of the children.
- Children are welcome to bring in treats to celebrate a birthday or holiday. Due to various food allergies and dietary restrictions in our classrooms, we recommend supplying store-bought snacks still in the original packaging. Please check with your child’s teacher before bringing any homemade snacks.
- Additional nutrition, meal and portions ideas [Cooking Matters](#) and [Colorado WIC Program](#)

Good Lunch Box Suggestions for a Balanced, Nutritional Lunch.	
½ turkey sandwich Celery sticks Raisins Milk/water	Chicken strips Roll Orange wedges Broccoli Milk/water
Peanut butter on graham crackers Apple slices Carrot sticks Milk/water	Yogurt Crackers Sugar snap peas 100% juice

Pets & Visiting Animals

Staff may introduce a class pet to the classroom. Before a pet is introduced staff will inform parents to make sure there are no children with allergies. Roaring Fork School District has a strict no animal policy on school premises. Please keep your pets off school grounds.

Health and Safety Policies

Illness

We understand that it is difficult for a family member to leave or miss work, but to protect other children, you may not bring a sick child to the center. The center has the right to refuse a child who appears ill. If there are doubts about sending a child to school, a good rule to follow is, "if another child had the symptoms your child is experiencing, would you want your child to be exposed?"

For further reference, parents can review the "How Sick is Too Sick?" Guideline that is in Brightwheel documents.

During the COVID-19 pandemic we are following all of Pitkin County health guidelines, updated information and the COVID algorithm can be found at: <https://covid19.pitkincounty.com/>

Symptoms

Below is a list to determine when children should be denied admission to the center or sent home because of health reasons. This is not an all-inclusive list.

You will be called and asked to retrieve your child if your child exhibits any of these symptoms. We will try to keep your child comfortable while at school, but he/she will be excluded from all activities until you arrive.

- Illness that prevents your child from participating in activities.
- Illness that results in greater need for care than we can provide.
- Fever (above 100°F).
- Diarrhea – stools with blood or mucus, and/or uncontrolled, unformed stools that cannot be contained in a diaper/underwear or toilet.
- Vomiting – green or bloody, and/or 2 or more times during the previous 24 hours.
- Mouth sores caused by drooling.
- Rash with fever, unless a physician has determined it is not a communicable disease.
- Pink or red conjunctiva with white or yellow eye discharge, until on antibiotics for 24 hours.
- Impetigo, until 24 hours after treatment.
- Strep throat, until 24 hours after treatment.
- Head lice, until treatment and all nits are removed.
- Scabies, until 24 hours after treatment.
- Chickenpox, until all lesions have dried and crusted.
- Pertussis (Whooping Cough), until 5 days of antibiotics.
- Hepatitis A virus, until one week after immune globulin has been administered.

Children who have been ill may return when:

- They are free of fever, vomiting and diarrhea for 24 hours.
- They have been treated with an antibiotic for 24 hours.
- They are able to participate comfortably in all usual activities.
- They are free of open, oozing skin conditions and drooling (not related to teething) unless:
 - The child's physician signs a note stating that the child's condition is not contagious, and;
 - The involved areas can be covered by a bandage without seepage or drainage through the bandage.
- If a child had a reportable communicable disease, a physician's note stating that the child is no longer contagious and may return to our care is required.

Notice of Exposure & Reporting Disease

If Growing Years has two or more reported communicable illnesses and your child could have been exposed, a notice will be shared via Brightwheel and email. If your child or anyone in your household becomes ill with a communicable disease, please notify GYS immediately.

In the event a child is reported to have a communicable disease, GYS will notify the health department.

Medications

All medications should be handed to a staff member with specific instructions for administration. All teachers are trained in Medical Administration and Standard Precaution. Medications should never be left in the child's cubby or with the child to administer on their own. Our staff will ensure that the medication is recorded along with the directions and proceed to dispense the medication as directed. All medications are stored in a lock box out of reach of children. Inhalers and epinephrine are stored in a place that can be easily accessed by teachers when needed.

- **Prescription medications** require a note signed by the family and a written order from the child's physician. The medication must include your child's name, dosage, current date, frequency, and the name and phone number of the physician. All medications must be in the original container (you may request pharmacies to fill your prescription in two labeled bottles). Please specify the dosage and time(s) to be administered for each medication.
- **Non-prescription medications** require a note signed by the physician.
- **Non-prescription topical ointments** (e.g., diaper cream) require a note signed by the physician if a child already has a diaper rash, specifying frequency and dosage to be administered. Teachers are only allowed to apply diaper rash without a physician's note if it's being used as a preventative.

Physicals and Immunizations

Each child must have a current physical and immunization record on file at Growing Years to attend. The physical on file must be updated at least annually; immunization records must be updated whenever a new immunization is received.

Colorado follows recommendations set by the Advisory Committee on Immunization Practices (ACIP). You can view the recommended vaccine schedule for children 0 - 6 years of age at <https://cdphe.colorado.gov/public-immunization-information>. Please provide a copy of your student's updated vaccine record to school every time they receive a vaccine.

Your student may be excluded from school if Growing Years does not have an up-to-date vaccine record or certificate of exemption for your student on file. If someone gets sick with a vaccine-preventable disease or there is an outbreak at GYS and your student has not received the vaccine for that disease, they may be excluded from school activities.

If you choose to file a non-medical exemption for your child you are required by Colorado law ([SB20-163 School Entry Immunization](#)) to have the exemption signed by the immunizing provider or you may complete the Colorado Department of Public Health and Environment's online education module prior to claiming a non-medical exemption, <https://cdphe.colorado.gov/vaccine-exemptions>.

Colorado child care and school immunization and exemption rates can be found at COVaxRates.org.

Documentation of Accidents/Incidents

Safety is a major concern in child care and so daily safety inspections are completed inside and outside the center area in order to prevent injuries. First aid will be administered by a trained caregiver in the event that your child sustains a minor injury (e.g., scraped knee). You will receive an incident report outlining the incident and course of action taken. If the injury produces any type of swelling or needs medical attention, you will be contacted immediately. Each classroom is equipped with a first aid kit meeting the state regulations.

In the event of a serious medical emergency, the child will be taken to the hospital immediately by ambulance, while we will try to contact you or an emergency contact.

Documents of Allergies

If your child has a food or any other allergy, you will be contacted by our nurse to put together a health care plan that should be signed by your child's physician and updated annually. This form will be posted in your child's classroom, as well as in food preparation areas.

Documents of Special Health Care Needs

An Emergency Care Plan will be on file for any child with special health care needs (seizures, etc.). A copy of the Emergency Care Plan must be kept in the classroom emergency binder. All staff working in the classroom must familiarize themselves with this plan, should an emergency arise. If necessary, staff will receive training regarding a child's specific health care needs.

Sunscreen

Each child is required to have his/her own bottle of sunscreen with his/her full name printed on it. Because of the school's high altitude location, protection from the sun is crucial throughout the year. If your child does not have sunscreen at school, we will be applying the following brand on your child: Rocky Mountain Sunscreen SPF- 50.

Tobacco Use and Prohibited Substances

Cigarettes/ Vapes and smokeless tobacco products are prohibited on premises, including outdoor play areas, parking lots, and any vehicle used by the center.

The possession or use of alcohol or any illegal drug is also prohibited on the center's premises.

Any adult who appears to be inebriated, intoxicated, or otherwise under the influence of mind-altering or polluting substances is required to leave the premises immediately.

Dangerous Weapons

A dangerous weapon is a gun, knife, razor, or any other object, which by the manner it is used or intended to be used, is capable of inflicting bodily harm. Families, children, staff or guests (other than law enforcement officers) possessing a dangerous weapon will not be permitted onto the premises.

In cases that clearly involve a gun, or any other weapon on our premises, the police will be called and the individual(s) involved will be immediately removed from the premises. This policy applies to visible or concealed weapons.

Child Custody

Without a court document, both parents/guardians have equal rights to custody. We are legally bound to respect the wishes of the parent/guardian with legal custody based on a certified copy of the most recent court order, active restraining order, or court-ordered visitation schedule. We will not accept the responsibility of deciding which parent/guardian has legal custody where there is no court documentation

Mandatory Child Abuse Reporters

We are required by law to report all observations of child abuse or neglect cases to the appropriate state authorities if we have reasonable cause to believe or suspect a child is suffering from abuse or neglect or is in danger of abuse or neglect, no matter where the abuse might have occurred. The child protective service agency will determine appropriate action and may conduct an investigation. It then becomes the role of the agency to determine if the report is substantiated and to work with the family to ensure the child's needs are met. Our center will cooperate fully with any investigation and will maintain confidentiality concerning any report of child abuse or neglect.

24/7 Hotline: Call 1-844-CO-4-KIDS (844-264-5437)

Affidavit Policy

At times families may be dealing with difficult situations at home. When legal matters are present in the home, families may need to collect affidavits for their legal team. Due to the nature of the relationship between caregiver and child, families may choose to ask a Growing Years staff member to provide such a statement. Our program's priority is providing the best possible care when children are away from home and our focus will remain on the child, making sure all their needs are met during what could be a difficult time at home. Growing Years staff members will not provide written statements or affidavits of a professional nature to families.

Guidance Strategies

General Procedure

Thoughtful direction and planning ahead are used to prevent problems and encourage appropriate behavior. Communicating consistent, clear rules and involving children in problem solving help children develop their ability to become self-disciplined. We encourage children to be fair, to be respectful of other people, of property, and to learn to understand the results of their actions.

Acts of Aggression and Fighting

Children are guided to treat each other and adults with self-control and kindness. When a child becomes physically aggressive, we intervene immediately to protect all of the children.

Our usual approach to helping children with challenging behaviors is to show them how to solve problems using appropriate interactions. When discipline is necessary, it is clear, consistent and understandable to the child.

Physical restraint is not used or permitted for discipline. There are rare instances when we need to ensure a child's safety or that of others and we may restrain a child by gently holding her or him only for as long as is necessary for control of the situation.

Biting

Biting is a normal stage of development that is common among infants and toddlers – and sometimes even among preschoolers. It is something that most young children will try at least once.

When biting happens, our response will be to care for and help the child who was bitten and to help the biter to learn a more appropriate behavior. Our focus will not be on punishment for biting, but on effective behaviors that address the specific reason for biting.

Notes will be written to the family of the child who was bitten and the biters family. We will work together with the families of each to keep them informed and to develop strategies for change.

Respectful Behavior

All children and families will be treated with respect and dignity. In return, we expect the same from all of our families. We will not tolerate hostile or aggressive behavior. If this occurs, we reserve the right to ask you to control your behavior or to remove your children from our care.

Communication and Family Partnership

New Family Orientation

Each family is strongly encouraged to schedule a time with the director to complete a “New Family Orientation.” This orientation is a great time for parents to get to know the program better and to familiarize themselves with policies and procedures and to get to know our staff.

Brightwheel

The Brightwheel communication app serves as a control center for communication between staff, teachers, and parents. Brightwheel is used for daily sign-in and sign out, daily communications between teacher and parent, houses commonly-referred to documents and other fun communication such as photos of your child’s school day.

Download for [apple](#) and [android](#)

Daily Communication

The classrooms primarily use Brightwheel to communicate, share photos, notes and incidents. Emails will be sent with additional information when needed, but Brightwheel will be the primary form for daily communication.

Parent-Teacher Conferences/ Assessment Portfolios

At GYS we use an assessment program called: Teaching Strategies Gold (TS Gold). Teaching Strategies GOLD is an authentic, ongoing observational system for assessing children from birth through kindergarten. It helps teachers to observe children in the context of everyday experiences, which is an effective way to learn what they know and can do.

Parent-teacher conferences will be held 2 times per year and parents are highly encouraged to participate. Conferences provide an opportunity for parents and teachers to discuss children’s progression toward developmental milestones. TS Gold assessment data is also shared with parents during these conferences. You may request additional conferences regarding your child’s progress at any time. We encourage you to communicate any concerns.

Newsletters

A monthly newsletter providing parents with general information and announcements about the center will be posted on Brightwheel and sent via email. A hard copy can be requested and a copy of our newsletters will also be posted on the bulletin board by the front office and by each classroom.

Interpreters

We have a bilingual teacher in most of our classrooms that is available to parents when a translator is needed. Much of the communication between home and school is available in both English and Spanish, but an interpreter can also be used to communicate as needed at parent conferences and meetings.

We believe that children of all ability levels are entitled to the same opportunities for participation, acceptance and belonging in child care. We will make every reasonable accommodation to encourage full and active participation of all children in our program based on his/her individual capabilities and needs.

Non-Discrimination

At GYS equal educational opportunities are available for all children, without regard to race, color, creed, national origin, gender, age, ethnicity, religion, disability, or parent/provider political beliefs, marital status, sexual orientation or special needs, or any other consideration made unlawful by federal, state or local laws. Educational programs are designed to meet the varying needs of all students.

Special Needs Care Policy

GYS is committed to the principle of inclusion and complies with the Americans with Disabilities Act. We are committed to every child equally, regardless of their special needs, and will commit to learning more about each child's specific needs and finding the best resources necessary to accomplish our common goal of finding the best care for each child. We believe that including children with special needs can enrich the experience of learning for all children and GYS will make accommodations for children with special needs within the guidelines of ADA.

Multiculturalism

Multiculturalism is vital for all children because it sets social goals and promotes respect for all people and the environment we inhabit. We utilize books, music, games, and a wide range of activities as aids to teach our children respect for our world and the diversity of life upon it.

Celebrations

Our holiday policy encourages an enhanced understanding of and respect for all cultures and beliefs of children, families, staff and community. Rituals are very important to children; families are encouraged to share any special celebrations or family traditions.

Birthdays and other special days are wonderful to share with all children. While children's birthdays are important and special to them, they also are important to other children. Parents should send invitations through the mail to those children invited to a party given outside of school, unless all children in the room are invited, in which case the invitations may be left in the children's cubbies.

Transitions

Your child's transition in child care should be a positive and exciting learning adventure. We will work with you and your child to ensure the smoothest possible transition occurs as new routines and new people are introduced.

- **Transition from home to center:** Prior to your child's first day, you will have an opportunity to tour the center, meet with your child's peers and teachers, and communicate any anticipated concerns. At this time please share the best communication methods that the teacher may use to reach you.
- **Transition between learning programs:** Children are transitioned to the next program based on age, developmental readiness, state licensing requirements, and space availability. As the time for a transition to a new room approaches, you will receive a letter containing information about your child's transition into his/her new classroom. Both your child's current and future teacher are available to address any questions or concerns you have during the transition process. Before the transition into a new classroom has been completed, parents are encouraged to schedule a meeting with the new teacher in order to familiarize themselves with the new classroom, children, and curriculum.

Parent Participation/Volunteer Policy

Parent participation is strongly encouraged in our program. As you know, tuition never covers the cost of running a high quality program. Our program is made possible by fundraising and grant support. Fundraising events in the past have included Ducky Derby and Super Bowl Bingo, but others may occur throughout the year. Parents are highly encouraged to participate in these events, as children are the direct beneficiaries of these fundraisers. Please reach out if you would like to be involved in additional fundraising efforts.

We also try our best to find ways parents can help without infringing on their time or their budgets. Success in these endeavors will help us keep our tuition low, which is always our goal.

Some possible opportunities to participate and contribute to your child's classroom experience:

- Field trip transportation and supervision
- Leading or assisting special projects (sewing, carpentry, cooking, etc.)
- Construction or collection of raw materials for art projects, dramatic play props, etc.
- Eating lunch or snack with your child – please inform the teachers one day in advance
- Volunteering in your child's classroom

Annual Events

Noted on the school calendar, we host annual events such as Mother's Day Tea, Father's Day Ice cream Social, Teacher Appreciation, Pre-K Graduation and a Family Picnic. Additional information about these events will be disseminated through the newsletter and on the Brightwheel app as the events near.

Quality Improvement Plans & Parent Surveys

At Growing Years, we have a Quality Improvement Plan (QIP) that we update annually. Each year we also send out a survey for parents to complete a program evaluation. The information gathered from these anonymous surveys is used by the staff and stakeholders to develop goals for our center and to improve the overall quality of care at our center. A parent's point of view is different from a teacher's point of view. Therefore, parent feedback on the program evaluations is very important to the success of our program and satisfaction of our families.

Our survey results as well as our QIP are shared with parents, staff and board members via email, on the Brightwheel app, and a hard copy (available in the office).

Connecting families with community service agencies

In addition to the daily curriculum we offer, we also offer a variety of additional services to parents:

- On an annual basis parents and children are offered dental, hearing and vision screenings. Our hearing and dental screenings are offered by our health nurse. The Lions Club of Basalt offers eye screenings to all children at our center.
- Children with concerning behaviors will be discussed with parents. Parents are encouraged to contact Child Find, a service offered through Roaring Fork School District, for the child to be observed.
- Our Health Nurse is available to answer and help parents with any health concerns they might have.
- Basalt Lift-Up food pantry is available to families in need.
- As of 2022, GYS has partnered with Claire Winchester, new mental health specialist available to all children, families and staff Claire can be reached at: claire@winchesterconsulting.org

Parent Education Opportunities

One of our boards initiatives is to provide parent education opportunities to strengthen our school home connection. Information and parent resources on topics such as Mental health, Nutrition, Child health and safety will be offered throughout the year. Additional information about these educational opportunities will be disseminated through the newsletter and on the Brightwheel app.

Grievances

Grievances between or among Growing Years and any participant, staff, parent, or Board member, must be handled by all parties with the intent of a satisfactory resolution of the problem or issue. All parties must recognize and honor the commitment for resolution. Each has a responsibility to help solve the problem in a manner consistent with the welfare of children and the school's mission.

A grievance or problem should be addressed using the following procedure:

- All parties must agree to meet as soon as possible to discuss the problem;
- All parties must agree that they want to find a solution to the problem;
- All parties must agree to listen to each other;
- Each party will relate his/her understanding of the issue at hand;
- All parties must agree to make suggestions as to how they can help solve the problem; and
- The solution must be mutually agreed upon.
- In the case that no resolution can be agreed upon by both parties, assistance from a Board member must be requested.

Questions/Concerns

If you have a question or concern (*big or small*), do not hesitate to ask. Please bring it to the attention of any staff member or any board member. Communication is the cornerstone of successful programs for young children, and your voice matters and your concerns are important to us.

The Director can be reached at (970) 927-8008 or growingyearsbasalt1@gmail.com and a list of current Board Members can be found on Brightwheel as well as the monthly newsletter.

Parents who feel they have not had a satisfactory resolution to their complaint may call the Department of Human Services at 303-945-9191 or 1-800-799-5876 or write them at the Denver Office, Colorado Department of Human Services, 1575 Sherman Street, Denver, CO 80203

Security & Emergency Procedures

Fire, Tornado, Bomb, or other Emergency Situations

In the event of a fire, bomb threat, or other evacuation emergencies, the children and teachers will immediately leave the building and go to each class' designated spot. Once all children are accounted for all classes will meet at the Fire Station in Basalt. Our center is fully equipped with fire alarms and lights. And our fire evacuation plan is reviewed with the children and staff on a monthly basis.

In the event of a tornado, each classroom has a designated area to seek shelter until the emergency is over. Parents will be called as soon as safely possible following an emergency situation.

In the event of any suspicious or threatening persons or incident on school grounds, the teachers and admin are required to call 911 and/or use panic buttons that are equipped in each office. Our center's doors are always locked and can only be entered via door code. The door codes will change regularly for added security. Emergency, Lockdown Drills, Shelter-in-Place Drill and Active Shooter on Premises Drills are conducted quarterly.

For the safety of children, parents, and staff, we ask that parents do not attempt to pick up their child during an emergency situation.

Blizzard/ Severe Winter Weather

We follow the RE-1 school district for any weather related closures; all closures will be communicated via Brightwheel.

Missing or Abducted Child

In the unlikely event of a missing child, all available staff will search for the child in the immediate area.

If the child cannot be located within 10 minutes, the Director will notify the Basalt Police Department and the child's parents.

Power Failure

Staff members and children should remain in the classroom and, if possible, proceed with activities as usual, or may go to the outdoor playground until power resumes. If power cannot be restored within a reasonable amount of time, the center will close and parents will be contacted.

Emergency Transportation

In the event your child needs to be transported due to a medical emergency, if no other authorized person can be contacted and the need for transportation is essential, an ambulance will be called for transportation. A proper escort will accompany and remain with the child until a family member or emergency contact arrives. In the case of medical transport, it will be the liability of the parent/family to any cost incurred.

Growing Years School Handbook Agreement

A handbook agreement must be signed and initialed before your child starts their first day.

Family Handbook Acknowledgement

Please sign this acknowledgement, detach it from the handbook, and return it to the center prior to enrollment.

The handbook may be updated from time-to-time, and notice will be provided as updates are completed.

Thank you for your cooperation, and we look forward to getting to know you and your family.

I have received the **Growing Years School Family Handbook**, and reviewed the family handbook with a member of the **Growing Years School** staff. It is my responsibility to understand and familiarize myself the Family Handbook and to ask center management any questions I may have regarding any policy, procedure or information contained in the **Growing Years School Family Handbook**.

[I have read and agree to the above policies. \(This recommended by Colorado Child Care Licensing\)](#)

Recipient Signature

Date

Center Staff Signature

Date