

PARENT HANDBOOK

Welcome to the Groden Center!

The Groden Center, Inc. welcomes you to our network of programs. The Center was created in 1976, in partnership with families, to provide a range of maximally effective services to persons with autism and other behavioral and emotional problems and their families. The array of services that have been developed over the years reflects the continuum of supports needed by individuals at various stages of their lives. The Groden Center, along with its partners, the Cove and Halcyon Centers, are proud that we have helped to make a difference in the lives of people with disabilities.

Our Mission

The Groden Network's mission is to support children and adults with autism, other developmental disabilities, and behavioral challenges to lead productive, dignified, and satisfying lives by:

- Providing the most effective educational, therapeutic, and other habilitative *services*;
- Advancing *knowledge and best practices* through research, education, and training;
- Involving, educating, and supporting *families* in caring and advocating for their children.

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Description of Services

The Groden Center has been recognized as a leader in providing community-based and family-oriented services. Its expertise in behavioral technology, emphasizing positive procedures, has been effectively applied within integrated community environments to individuals with a range of disabilities. Services provided by the Center include individual behavior therapy; educational programs; adaptive living skills; social skills development; vocational training, placement, and supported employment; family support through in-home programming, parent education, support groups, a siblings club, and respite; therapeutic recreation; early intervention for infants and toddlers; an intensive in-home treatment program for preschool aged children; therapeutic foster care; group homes; and therapy and consultation services for individuals, their families, and other service providers.

In keeping with the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) regulations, the program operates on the premise that the developmental environment of the students be as least restrictive and normal as possible. Teaching methods are designed so that behaviors learned in one setting will be generalized to less restrictive settings as well. The Center programs are also taught in community settings in order to provide students with multiple opportunities to interact with normal peers and adults and under natural environmental contingencies.

Student Evaluations

Multi-disciplinary evaluations are conducted in order to determine a student's program needs. Standard evaluations include an initial behavioral assessment; psychological, psychiatric, speech and language, educational and vocational evaluations; and a social history. Evaluations in each of the areas can be re-administered every three years. At the annual planning meeting, the parents and professionals discuss the need to re-evaluate the student in any of the areas. *The parent must give written permission to conduct any re-evaluations.*

Some of the advantages of evaluations include:

- An evaluation provides information about skills the student has learned, skills he/she has almost learned, and skills he/she needs to learn.
- An evaluation provides a basis for planning an appropriate Individualized Education Plan.
- An evaluation provides an idea of skills the student may realistically be expected to learn, and therefore, what goals are most appropriate to plan for the student.

The result of this evaluation process is the development of an Individualized Education Plan, which is described in the next section.

Individualized Education Plans (IEPs) & Progress Reporting

Special education services include individualized programming in areas such as readiness skills, written and spoken language, mathematics, science, social studies, everyday living skills, socialization, and leisure. Several published curricula are supplemented by a variety of other materials developed by the Center.

Certified special education personnel coordinate the preparation of the students' IEPs and work alongside other treatment staff in implementing all elements of the plan. Because direct care staff have the most familiarity with the students' total programs, they are involved in carrying out all specialty programs under appropriate supervision.

The Groden Center designs Individualized Education Plans (for both educational and therapeutic goals) for each student. IEPs are developed for new students following a 6-8 week assessment and observation period. Pre-IEP consultations are held between teachers, parents, specialists, and supervisors to develop goals and objectives. *Attendance at the IEP meeting is required by both a school department representative and the parent(s)/guardians.* In addition to the parent, school department, and Groden staff, the parent is welcome to invite other participants as they wish. The Center will arrange a mutually agreeable time for the IEP meeting.

The Individualized Education Plan includes the following:

- a statement of the student's strengths and needs;
- annual goals and short-term objectives;
- criteria, procedures, and a schedule for implementing and measuring short term objectives;
- a transition plan for students 14 and over;
- specific behavioral and special education programs and services to be provided;
- a description of supplemental or related service needs
- participation in the statewide assessment process;

IEP objectives are assessed continuously using data-based strategies. Progress reports are prepared five times yearly, with new IEPs developed annually. When necessary, modifications are made to the IEP throughout the year with approval of parents and a school department representative. A parent may request a review of the IEP at any time.

Clinical Services

Because of the complex behavioral, emotional, and social problems of the students served, the Center provides a comprehensive array of clinical services which are closely tailored to students' needs and carefully integrated with other aspects of their programs. These services include social skills training, relaxation and cognitive therapies, imagery-based procedures, and limited student/group counseling. For students requiring more intensive support for an extended period of time, services may be contracted for through our Community Support Services Department.

Clinicians providing these services are knowledgeable about details of each student's entire program. This enables learned skills and behaviors to be practiced and reinforced throughout the student's daily activities and within various environments.

Communication Programs

Students at the Center present a wide and varied range of communication problems. The speech and language pathologists and treatment teachers attempt to remediate communication problems ranging from disorders at the prelinguistic level to higher level language disorders of content (ideas about the world), form (syntax, morphology, articulation), and use (purpose for communication).

The communication program at the Center represents a functional approach to the remediation of speech and language difficulties. Teachers are encouraged to view communication goals as an ongoing process. Consequently, generalization of goals from the structured session to the naturalistic environment is realized in all possible situations. The speech and language clinicians evaluate students, write goals and objectives, design implementation strategies, and train teachers in carrying out the programs as described. *Direct speech and language therapy is only provided when recommended by the pathologist and for the purposes of assessment, demonstration, and training.*

Physical Education and Recreation Program

The acquisition of skills and the participation in activities are the primary goals of the physical education and recreational program. Fundamental skill building is concentrated in the areas of body awareness, sensory integration, basic locomotion, balance, gross motor, projectile management, and motor planning. Instruction is provided individually, in small groups, and in large groups, depending on the activity and the needs of those involved. Activities such as swimming, personal fitness, cooperative adapted games and Special Olympics provide opportunities to practice and extend skills.

Vocational Education Program

The purpose of the vocational education program at the Groden Center is to prepare students for the world of work. This goal is addressed through comprehensive training in specific job competencies and work-related collateral skills which are necessary for job success.

The program provides both Center-based and community-based instruction to adolescents and young adults. The Center-based programming includes periodic evaluation beginning at age 14 and exposure to both real and simulated work routines to promote skill development and to assess preferences and aptitudes. Community based learning occurs in the context of both volunteer and compensated activities. The program maintains community placement opportunities in office, hospital, greenhouse, and factory settings. Community based volunteerism includes hot meal delivery and park beautification programs.

Following thorough evaluation and preparation, students begin working at a job site which is carefully selected, based upon student aptitude and interest, and specific job characteristics.

Initially, students receive continuous supervision from Center staff, in order to ensure a successful transition and integration. Center personnel maintain ongoing communication with site supervisors, and the Center's direct involvement with students is gradually reduced. As students become more independent, Center support continues through regular supervisor contact and communication with site personnel.

Occupational and Physical Therapy Services

A licensed occupational therapist is on staff at the Center to assist treatment staff design teaching strategies to meet the general OT needs of the students, including perceptual fine motor skills, self help skills, and sensory processing. A licensed physical therapist consultant is also available to make recommendations to teachers. When a student has had an occupational or physical therapy evaluation that recommends goals and intervention strategies for classroom teachers, our therapist will assist in and monitor those programs. They will also screen new students to determine if formal evaluations are warranted which would then be requested through the student's school department or conducted by Groden Center staff or consultants. Recommendations from the evaluations are integrated into the student's Individualized Education Plan (IEP) and are implemented by teaching staff. *The Center does not provide direct physical or occupational therapy services, but will facilitate the acquisition of these services as requested.*

Medical & Nursing Services

A registered Program Nurse is available from 9:00 a.m. to 3:00 p.m. during the Day Program, and for variable hours in the Residential Program. These professionals are responsible for the daily health and safety needs of the students and residents. The Day Program Nurse administers any medications to students that are prescribed by their physicians and approved by parents. The Residential Program Nurse manages the medications, assists parents/guardians in coordinating the medical care of the residents, and responds to their ongoing health and safety needs. A pediatrician provides consulting services to the program. He/she provides assistance with the Center's health and safety policies and guidelines.

Family Services

Family members are an integral part of The Groden Center. The Center works with the family to plan, implement, and evaluate the child's program, maintaining frequent communication through telephone contacts, a communication notebook, home and Center visits, support groups, and progress reports. The following activities are coordinated through the Family Services Department:

- A home assessment conducted when a student begins in the program to help plan with the family the services and supports that may be desired and needed.
- A one-time workshop series on behavior management principles and techniques for parents of new students.

- Center visits by parents for the purposes of exchanging information and observing in the classroom to learn appropriate development and behavior management programs for use with their children, as appropriate.
- Home visits by Center personnel for the purpose of exchanging information and teaching parents appropriate developmental enhancement and behavior management techniques for use with their Groden Center children in the home or community, as needed up to twice a month. Once during each calendar year the frequency of home visits may be increased to once per week for six (6) weeks, if needed. More intensive family services must be contracted for through our Community Support Services department. (Note: If an emergency arises and we are currently serving a large number of families at the higher service intensity of six (6) weekly home visits and do not have staff available to begin visiting another family, additional funds might need to be requested from an outside source in order to serve the next family needing more intensive services in a timely manner). When more intensive in-home supports are necessary the family is referred to a CEDARR Center for home based therapeutic services.
- Special event days are regularly scheduled throughout the program year designed to provide the students, their families and friends, and the Center staff with the opportunity to interact in a relaxed and enjoyable environment.
- The parent library, located with the Family Services Department, contains a variety of materials that are of interest to parents and other family members. The library contains books on behavior modification, video and cassette tapes, teaching manuals, and general information, such as the legal rights of and financial resources for handicapped people. A selection of pamphlets is arranged by category. The parent library holds back any current issues of "The Exceptional Parent" a journal published bimonthly by the Council for Exceptional Children.

The objective of organizing and maintaining the parent library is to make available to family members current materials relating to children and young adults with developmental disabilities. As new materials are obtained, they will be noted in *Pathways for Families*. All parents are encouraged to utilize these available resources, as well as, to share their ideas pertaining to the acquisition of new materials to add to the current holdings of the parent library. The Center is in the process of identifying and obtaining materials in various languages to increase accessibility to the information.

Parents and other family members may obtain, upon request, a completed bibliography of available materials. The procedure for checking items out of the parent library is as follows: the Family Services Coordinator is contacted by note or telephone; the item(s) are requested; and the item(s) desired are sent home from the Center with the child. All parent library materials may be checked out for a period of two weeks. Family members are welcome to visit the parent library and use the resources on the Center premises. To arrange a visit, please contact the Family Services Coordinator at least one day prior to the visit.

Student & Family Rights

Rights of Students and Their Families

The Centers do not discriminate on the basis of race, religion, sex, ethnicity, age, disability, or sexual orientation. The Center shall treat each student with dignity and respect, and information disclosed by the student and/or family shall be kept confidential in accordance with federal and state laws and applicable court orders. We keep students and parents informed of these rights through provision of this Parent Handbook and ongoing meetings and notices.

Every student (or as represented by the parent/guardian for students under 18) shall have the following *rights in their care and treatment*:

1. The right to have equal protection under the law and to be free from discrimination.
2. The right to be treated with dignity and respect.
3. The right to have friends and intimate relationships.
4. The right to privacy of information, during communication, and in living environments.
5. The right to participate in the least restrictive setting and have meaningful community integration.
6. The right to receive individualized treatment and to participate in the development of a written treatment plan.
7. The right to be informed of the nature of care, procedures, and treatment that he or she will receive, as well as the nature of the proposed discharge plans.
8. The right to be informed of the risks, benefits, or side effects of any treatment prescribed.
9. The right to refuse any treatment by the Center.
10. The right to be informed of any alternative treatment procedures available.
11. The right to be free of restrictive restraints or isolation unless specifically consented to as part of his/her treatment plan.
12. The right to inspect his/her clinical record and to be informed of his/her clinical status at reasonable intervals of time.
13. The right to refuse to participate in any research project without compromising his/her access to facility services.

14. The right to be informed of the Center's responsibility to report physical or psychological abuse to the appropriate protection agency.
15. The right to be informed of the rules and regulations of the Center that apply to the student.
16. The right to be furnished with the name of the staff members responsible for his/her care, their professional status, and their staff relationship.
17. The right to be informed of any proposed change in the staff responsible for his/her care, or for any transfer of the student either within or outside the Center.
18. The right to wear his/her own clothing and use personal articles unless those items are dangerous to self or others, and the right to obtain, keep, use, and dispose of personal possessions.
19. The right to Procedural Safeguards in Special Education outlined in the “Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA)” federal law and state regulations (see document in the appendix of this Handbook).
20. The right to initiate a complaint or grievance by contacting the Center's Program/Residential Director, the Human Rights Committee Officer, any employee of the Center, or any other social service agency representative.

Transfer of Parental Rights to Student

As required by the “IDEA” federal law, students will be informed when they are 17 years old that the rights previously afforded their parents transfer to them at the age of 18 years. A letter entitled “Student Notice: Transfer of Rights” will be given to them at their IEP meetings during the year in which they turn 17 years. The transferred rights include (a) receiving notice of IEP meetings and progress reviews, (b) giving consent to release information, (c) signing approval of their own IEP, (d) giving permission for specific evaluations and behavior treatments, and (d) due process procedures. The parents will be given a similar letter, “Parent Notice: Transfer of Rights.” At this IEP meeting, the Transition Coordinator will discuss with parents their ability to seek guardianship of their child beyond the age of 18 if their child will continue to need substantial support in their personal and financial decision-making.

Confidentiality

One of the primary rights of the students and their families is the right to privacy and dignity of treatment. No identifying information (e.g., name, DOB, address, parents' name, relatives, etc.) is given when discussing students outside the Center or in the presence of other children or family members. This includes formal discussions with other professionals and informal conversations with friends and families. In addition, students are always referred to with respect for their personal dignity and humanity, and programs are designed based on the student’s strengths and learning needs.

The following guidelines are derived from the confidentiality laws:

- **Student records:** All admissions information, assessments, program descriptions, progress notes, and correspondence on a student are kept in secure locations. Staff are permitted to review the records of students with whom they work. The records must be signed out in the main office according to procedures. The records must remain in the building and be returned at the end of each day. All records must be kept confidential and shredded for disposal. A Release of Records form must be signed by the student's parent/guardian for release of any records to any party other than the funding agent(s). Records may be reviewed by parents/guardians and copies supplied upon request. Parents may request that records be amended and must be informed of the intent to destroy any records.
- **Research:** Staff and interns are permitted to give written and verbal reports about Center students in classes or other professional activities with the written consent of the parent/guardian. No identifying information is used. Written reports are reviewed prior to submission and accompanied by the permission form signed by the parent/guardian. Specific research projects are encouraged, but must conform to the research guidelines that include a written research proposal, review by the Research Committee, and parent/guardian permission.

Procedural Safeguards in Special Education

The parent/guardian of a child who requires special education and related services is guaranteed procedural safeguards in the following areas, as defined in the federal law entitled "Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA)." Please refer to the appendix for a description of each of these areas.

1. Independent educational evaluation
2. Written prior notice
3. Parental consent
4. Access to educational records
5. Opportunity to request a due process proceeding
6. Procedures for students who are subject to placement in an interim alternative educational setting
7. Requirements for unilateral placement by parents of children in private schools at public expense
8. Mediation
9. Due process hearings, including requirements for disclosure of evaluation results and recommendations
10. State level appeals
11. Civil actions
12. Attorneys' fees

Resolution of Conflicts

From time to time, conflicts will arise among those who participate in providing care and treatment. Conflict about care and treatment decisions may be between members of the

administration, professional staff, direct care staff, or between staff members and students and their parents/guardians. The Center will always work towards resolving issues fairly and objectively and will pursue a mutually satisfactory resolution.

If a student or a parent/guardian has a more serious grievance about a Center policy, procedure, or condition that does not involve an eminent safety risk or violation of human rights, the individual should be directed immediately to the Program/Residential Director to schedule a meeting (safety risks should be reported immediately to the Safety Committee and violations of rights should be reported to the Human Rights Officer). The Program/Residential Director will prepare a written summary of the meeting, including the resolution or the next steps to seeking a resolution. If the issue is unable to be resolved at this level, the Program/Residential Director will set up a meeting with the student/parent and the Center Directors. At any time, the student or parent can be represented by an advocate who may be family, friend, service provider, or staff member who will have the responsibility to assist the student/parent throughout the grievance process.

In addition to the Groden Center's internal policies for resolving conflicts, students and their parents/guardians have available to them two procedures mandated by the "IDEA" federal law; mediation and due process hearings (see Procedural Safeguards document given at IEP Meetings). Mediation is a means to facilitate an agreement between the parents and the school program through a state-appointed mediator. If the matter is not resolved through mediation or if mediation is not an option, a due process hearing may be requested from the State Department of Education, who will appoint a hearing officer to render a decision.

Reporting Abuse

The Rhode Island Law (R.I.G.L. 40-11-3) states "all employees are required to report known or suspected cases of child abuse and/or neglect to the Department of Children, Youth, and Families. Child abuse and neglect means the physical or mental injury, sexual abuse or exploitation, negligent treatment, or maltreatment of a child under the age of 18." For young adults 18 years and over, reports of suspected abuse are made to the state Division of Developmental Disabilities, Quality Assurance Services (464-2449). Any employee who has reasonable cause to know or suspect that any child or young adult has been abused or neglected, as defined above, must within 24 hours report this to the Program Director and/or the Department of Children, Youth, and Families CANTS hotline. All matters are kept strictly confidential.

Americans with Disabilities Act Compliance

The Center does not discriminate on the basis of race, color, religion, national origin, gender, age, sexual orientation, or disability in admissions, access, education, treatment, or employment in its programs and activities. Some areas of the program may be inaccessible to individuals with disabilities. However, whenever an individual with a disability wishes to attend or participate in a meeting, conference, program, or activity that is inaccessible, it will be relocated to an accessible area. Individuals with hearing impairments can contact the Center via the telecommunication relay service by calling 1-800-745-5555. Individuals with impaired vision and hearing may request written or audio material for information about the Center. The Program Director should be notified 48 hours in advance so that the arrangements can be made.

General Information, Routines & Procedures

The following information should serve to better acquaint you with the routines and procedures of the Center.

<u>Day Program Hours</u>	Monday-Friday	Saturday
Regular Day Program	8:30-2:30	
Saturday Program		10:00-3:00
Residential Students	8:30-3:30	10:00-3:00

Saturday Program

Some students are enrolled in the Saturday Therapeutic Recreation Program. Parents are responsible for transporting their children to this program. Staff preparation and student review sessions are scheduled from 9:30-10:00 and from 3:00-3:30. Students attending the Saturday Program should wait with parents until 10:00 a.m., at which time the staff will greet them at the Center's entrance. Students should be picked up no later than 3:00 p.m.

Classroom Assignment and Ratio

Students are assigned to classrooms according to their age, cognitive level, adaptive skills, programmatic needs, and behavioral characteristics. Unit assignments may change according to changes in student enrollment, program emphasis, age, etc. Parents are notified of their child's classroom assignment in August. If concerns arise regarding a student's appropriate assignment during the program year, Groden Center representatives will meet with the parents to discuss the concerns.

Classrooms are staffed by a team of direct care teachers, and a supervisor. The direct care teachers include a certified special education teacher and 3 to 4 treatment teachers (depending on the size of the classroom) who usually have bachelors degrees in psychology or other human development fields. IEPs are planned and written by all team members and coordinated by the special education teacher. All team members work with each student in the classroom in implementing the various IEP objectives.

The day program maintains an average ratio of 1 staff member to 2 students. When a student requires a more intensive program with a lower ratio (e.g., 1:1) for the majority of the program day, additional funding may be required, at least temporarily, to accommodate the need. The Program/Residential Director from the Groden Center and the school department will jointly determine this need either prior to a student's enrollment, following a recommendation made during the student's Behavioral Intake Assessment, or at such time when a student's behavior shows significant change that would warrant additional staff.

Transportation

The students are transported to and from their homes to the day program by their school districts' transportation departments. Students are admitted in the buildings at 8:30 and must be picked up between 2:30-2:50 each day, and 12:10 for the scheduled early dismissal days (occurring once or twice monthly). Bus aides are responsible for walking with the student to and from the entrance where they will be met by a Groden Center staff member. Students must never be left to walk to or from the building or their classrooms without a parent, bus aide, or staff member by their side.

If the student is having difficulty boarding the bus at the end of the day, the bus will be asked to wait for a reasonable amount of time until it is safe for the student to leave. If the bus must leave before that time, and if it cannot return to pick up the student, the parent is responsible for coming to the Center to transport their child home.

Once a bus leaves with the students, the school department is then responsible for that student until turned over to the parents/guardians. (Students may not be returned to the Center if a parent/guardian is not home.) If a school department decides to pick up students before scheduled time in emergencies (e.g., weather), the school department is responsible for notifying the parents/guardians.

Students are transported on community learning experiences and to and from residential homes by Center vans that are driven by staff members with an approved driver's license and Center certification.

Inquiries concerning transportation to and from the Center should be made to the school transportation department in the corresponding school district.

Attendance

Students are required by law to attend every day except for sickness or emergencies. A call to the Center at 8:00 a.m. should be made to report the cause of absence, since individual staff await the arrival of each student. Poor attendance places the student at risk for losing skills and services.

Release of Children

Requests for early dismissal or for special pick-up by a custodial parent must be made in writing, to the Center's Office. Parents must also notify their bus company if their child will not be riding on the bus. When picking up their child at the Center, parents must check in with the office so that there is a record of who took the student home.

Parents must authorize releasing their child to an individual other than the bus or themselves by placing their names on the Client Dismissal Information form that is part of the forms packet that is sent home annually. On or before the day when the child is to be released, the Center must then receive a written dated note or a telephone call from the custodial parent stating the name of the

person, the time of dismissal, the mode of transportation, and granting permission to release their child. When that person arrives, the Center will verify his/her identify by seeing a picture ID that includes name and address.

Calling the Center

The Center's Office is open Monday-Friday between 8:30 a.m. and 4:00 p.m. Parents may call during these hours to speak with their child's Unit Supervisor. Parents will be asked to leave a message or call between 3:00 p.m. and 3:30 p.m. if they wish to speak with classroom staff.

Center Visits & Meetings

Parents wishing to visit the Center should arrange this with the classroom supervisor or Family Services Staff. Parents must sign in at the office upon arrival. The receptionist will then contact the staff member.

Home Visits

Classroom staff and supervisors will schedule periodic visits to parent/guardians homes to discuss the students' progress, family concerns, and home programming needs. The Center requests that staff be able to visit homes at least four (4) times per year at a mutually convenient time.

Parent Notebooks

Notebooks containing the Center's programs and information about classroom activities, will go home periodically with the students. These notebooks should be reviewed by the parents; parent suggestions and ideas should be entered, and the notebooks sent back with the students.

Lunch

Students must bring their own lunch each day. Milk and/or juice and snacks will be provided by the Center. All lunch bags and boxes must be labeled. A balanced, nutritious lunch that includes a source of protein (peanut butter, cheese, lunch meat), a fruit, a carbohydrate (bread, crackers, pasta), and a dessert item if desired is recommended. Refrigeration and a microwave are available, but cooking facilities are limited, so please send a lunch that does not require teacher preparation.

Food Fee

The Center provides students with a variety of snacks, reinforcing foods and items, and community activities. While the educational programming needs of students are provided for through tuition funds, supplemental monies are required for some of the above items. The money from the fee is used for purchasing the snacks, milk and juice that we provide for students to compliment their lunches. It also is used to purchase food items that students order on community learning experiences. Parents are asked to contribute a monthly fee of \$30.00. A reminder will be sent at the end of each month.

Dress & Attitude

An important factor in educating students is their attitude towards the Center and education. If they are trained to have a respect for learning and a pride in their Center, then the task of the educator has a greater chance of meeting with success. Before one can show respect towards another, he/she must first have respect for him or herself. This respect begins with good personal hygiene and proper dress. Students should be neatly dressed and clean. Staff will discuss with you the best type of clothing to have your child dress in based on their activities during the day (physical activities, job sites, community learning experiences, etc.)

Additional Materials to Send

Students are requested to have the following labeled materials:

- Smock or old shirt to be left at the Center for art activities
- Sneakers to be left at the Center for physical education
- One complete change of clothing in a plastic bag or backpack, to be left at the Center and returned home only if used
- Toothbrush & toothpaste

If the student will be participating in the swimming program, the following materials are necessary. These materials will be used the day of swimming and returned to you the same day.

- Swim suit
- Towel
- Shampoo
- Toiletry Items

Community Learning Experiences

Students participate in community learning experiences on a weekly basis to work on specific goals that have been targeted in the IEP. When a special community learning experience is planned that requires traveling a greater distance or participation in a special activity, you will be asked to give permission prior to the date of the trip. The Center vans will be used to transport the children. Several staff members are trained and certified by the Center to drive its vehicles.

Toys & Favorite Items

Students may bring a special toy or favorite item to share with the group. It is advisable not to send a very expensive or fragile item. Destructive toys such as guns, knives, war games, etc., should not be brought to the Center.

Audio & Video Tapes and Books

Students are welcome to share their favorite tapes and books with their friends at the Center. These may be brought occasionally and every care will be taken to protect them from damage, but

the Center cannot be responsible for them. Any items brought in must not depict violence, inappropriate verbal language, or sexually suggestive material.

Lost & Found

All materials and clothing should be labeled, so they can be returned if misplaced. Designated cubbies/lockers are utilized upon arrival and at dismissal to ensure that students leave with the same clothing and materials that they had when they arrived. The student's school transportation department may have a lost and found department for articles lost in transit.

Birthday Celebrations

Parents desiring to have a birthday party at the Center for their child should contact their child's Classroom Supervisor.

Weather Emergencies - No School Announcement and Early Dismissal

Should stormy weather force postponement or cancellation of a day session, an announcement will be made over the local radio stations: WJAR, WPRO, WSNE, and WLKW. Postponements and cancellations are also listed on news Channel 10's website: <http://www.turnto10.com> on the Internet. The Center follows the lead of the Providence School System. Please listen to the radio for these announcements.

From time-to-time, unpredictable weather may necessitate an early dismissal during the day. In our community, we are subject to varying amounts of ice, sleet, and snow, and even hurricanes. Bad weather can develop quickly. If the Center is in session during a sudden deterioration in the weather, the administration will react to ensure the well being of the students in the following ways:

- Communication will be established with bus operators, if the announcement has not yet been made on television or the radio.
- If the consensus is that the students be returned home during the day before the weather conditions become dangerous, the entire Center will be dismissed early.
- If and when the Center dismisses early, it will be announced over the radio station, television stations and listed on News Channel 10's website indicating the time of dismissal. The Center will *not* call each parent to report the dismissal so please utilize these sources during bad weather.
- Individual school departments may follow their own schedule for early pick up at the Center, regardless of the dismissal time of the Center. The radio stations and News Channel 10's website will announce other school departments early closing times.

Parents must make emergency arrangements at the beginning of each program year by completing the Client Dismissal Information form that lists the name of a neighbor or relative who could assume responsibility for the student in case of a weather emergency.

Student Disciplinary Procedures

Maximum value is placed on respect for the individual students and consideration for their well-being, development, and quality of daily experience. Consistent with this value, as well as with the history and tradition of the Groden Center, a student's challenging behavior is viewed as an opportunity to teach new means of managing frustration, expressing desires and interests, and appropriately interacting with other people and their environment. When responding to challenging behaviors, staff collaborate with parents and other professionals (e.g., Psychologists, Speech and Language experts, etc.) in the use of positive, proactive teaching strategies tailored for the student and based on scientifically established principles of learning and development. These teaching strategies include:

- **Clearly articulated rules and expectations:** The basic rules of safe work and play, respect for materials, taking turns and sharing, helping others, etc. are reviewed daily. Reminders are given during situations in which the rules are not being followed. Problem-solving discussions occur to help the students develop an empathy for the effects of their behavior on others.
- **Skill building:** The student's curriculum teaches specific functional skills that replace challenging behavior. Examples include teaching problem-solving skills, teaching ways of expressing emotion, and teaching relaxation and self-management skills through imagery and guided practice.
- **Structuring the environment:** Whenever possible and practical, relevant aspects of the learning environment are structured to promote the greatest level of success for a student developing new skills in managing his/her own behaviors. Examples include increasing access to materials, rearranging the schedule, and changing instructional strategies.
- **Reinforcing appropriate behaviors:** Frequent "incidental" reinforcement (e.g., praise, pats on the back), role-playing and modeling, as well as structured positive reinforcement (e.g., contingent positive reinforcement procedures) are used as part of teaching adaptive, alternative behaviors. Also, when appropriate and feasible, decelerative strategies are used to promote the decrease of challenging behaviors (e.g., ignoring the student's yelling behavior).
- **Responding to disruptive or aggressive behaviors:** When a student is engaged in a challenging behavior, strategies such as changing the activity (e.g., initiating a calming activity), using active listening, or going to a designated area away from the event that was causing the behavior are used to diffuse the situation and decrease the likelihood of challenging behaviors occurring in the future. Gentle physical management (e.g., redirection, brief holding) is used if necessary to ensure the safety and well-being of the student and/or others. Non-positive alternatives may be used only in cases of self-injury, abuse to others, or other behaviors that present serious interference with necessary learning.

Interventions that are expressly prohibited include humiliating or demeaning a student verbally, physically, or through gesture or facial expression, and any form of corporal punishment, including slapping, hitting, etc.

When considering any intervention that is physically intrusive to a student (e.g., physical restraint), the intervention must first be approved by the Human Rights Officer, a clinical psychologist, the consulting psychiatrist, the consulting physician, and the parents. The intervention procedures are described in detail and demonstrated to the parents prior to requesting their permission. The parents have the right, at any time, to deny permission for the Center to use a particular intervention.

The Center maintains detailed records on the use of all interventions and the student's progress in meeting behavioral goals. These are reviewed weekly to ensure that the programs are the most appropriate for each student.

Change of Address

When moving, parents must inform (a) the Center, (b) the school department currently responsible for the student, and (c) the one to which the student is moving, *prior* to the move. The school department is responsible for paying the tuition for the program and transporting your child. Informing them well before the move will ensure that the student does not go without services for a period of time. A new Emergency Information form that indicates the new address must be completed immediately following the move.

Discharge from the Center

The Center staff shall work with the family, local school district, and other funding agents and providers to determine when the student can be discharged, typically back to the student's local school district or to an adult service provider. These decisions are made during the IEP meetings, at which time the transition process will also be determined. Preparing students for changing placement is an important step and one that is planned carefully with all parties and implemented gradually.

Should a student develop significant physical and/or mental health problems, including behavioral problems that endanger the physical health and safety of himself/herself, others, or property, that were not previously apparent, and which requires alternate placement or substantial changes in the program, the parents are asked to meet with staff in order to address and resolve the problems. If physical safety is not an issue, the Center will make every effort to maintain the student in the program during the search for an alternative placement, or work with the funding agent to develop a new program.

In the event that a parent wishes to remove his/her child from the program before the end of the contract period described in the IEP or service agreement, the parent is asked to give the Center ninety (90) days written notice of this intent.

Health & Safety Procedures

The Center employs a Program Nurse to oversee the health policies and procedures of the Center, to respond to day-to-day health needs, and to manage the medication that is administered on-site to students. Parents are asked to complete an Emergency Information form each year to provide names of contacts, medical information, immunizations, a health history, and a release for

emergency treatment. It is particularly important to note allergies to food or medications, and to outline any medical issues (i.e., seizures, asthma, etc.).

Physician's Exam

Parents are responsible for providing medical and dental care for their children. The Center encourages that the health of students be maintained by requiring periodic exams by physicians. It is important that staff and families be in frequent contact regarding the physical and mental status of students so that comprehensive information can be communicated to physicians to aid them in providing appropriate medical care.

Each student must receive a physical exam before entering the program. The Physician's Record of Exam form needs to be completed and returned before a student may enter the program. The student is then required to have his/her physician conduct a physical exam at age 5, 12, and 18 years, completing the form at the beginning of the year during which the student turns the designated ages. *The form must be signed by the physician and indicate dates of immunizations and the TB screening (Mantoux-PPD).*

Dental Screenings

The Center's consulting dentist will conduct annual dental screenings. Results and recommendations will be sent home and parents are responsible for follow-up dental care.

Immunizations

The child's physician must provide official verification (including month/day/year) of immunizations on the Physician's Record of Exam form when the student enters the program, and updated annually as new immunizations are given. The Hepatitis B Vaccination should be administered to anyone at risk of being exposed to the virus, especially those students who require assistance in personal hygiene or who have behaviors that potentially result in injuries (e.g., aggression, self injury, biting, tantrums). *The Groden Center requires that all residential students be vaccinated prior to entering the residence, unless contraindicated.*

The required immunization schedule is as follows:

RECOMMENDED AGE.....	VACCINES**
Birth.....	HBV
2 months.....	DTP, OPV, Hib, HBV
4 months.....	DTP, OPV, Hib
6 months.....	DTP, Hib, HBV
15 months.....	DTP, OPV, MMR
18 months.....	Hib
4-6 years.....	DTP, OPV, MMR
9-10 years.....	HBV
14-16 years.....	Td

*Please contact your physician for the schedule if immunizations were begun after age 7.

**Abbreviations: DPT (Diphtheria, Pertussis, Tetanus)
 OPV (Polio)
 Hib (Meningitis, Pneumonia)
 MMR (Measles, Mumps, Rubella)
 Td (Tetanus)
 HBV (Hepatitis B)

Daily Health Check

The Groden Center encourages preventative measures for health, including good dietary practices, body cleanliness, and cleanliness of the environment. The parents and Groden staff will discuss the typical diet and the routine for body care of a student. The Center will work together with the parents to develop a plan of working on any difficulties or problems in these areas. Staff members will conduct a daily health check of each student by observing physical signs of illness or discomfort and asking the student for information.

Illnesses

Parents must keep their child at home if he/she has a significant illness or any contagious condition that would endanger the health of other students and staff. This includes but is not limited to fever, strep throat, chicken pox, measles, mumps, conjunctivitis (pink-eye), diarrhea, vomiting, severe congestion and runny nose, croup, head lice, or scabies (see next section for more information on these conditions). If a student becomes ill with any significant or contagious symptoms during the day, *the parent or a designated person will be expected to pick up the student within one hour of being notified.* When necessary, the Program Nurse will send a letter to other parents indicating a particular illness and what signs to watch for.

The student cannot return until the incubation period has ended or until the student's physician writes a note of release. The student should be able to return to the Center after having been free of the contagious symptoms for 24 hours, having been on prescribed antibiotics for 24 hours, or with written doctor's permission.

Common Childhood Illnesses

Disease	Symptoms
Chicken pox	tired, headache, mild fever, runny nose itchy red spots on face/neck red spots spread over scalp, chest, back, upper arms, mouth spots appear to be small pimples or blisters filled with fluid
Conjunctivitis (pink-eye)	redness & tearing of eye occasionally formation of pus
Fifth disease	facial rash

	<p>"slapped cheek" appearance lace-like rash on body/arms/legs rash may fade & return</p>
Head injuries	<p>restlessness excessive drowsiness enlarged pupils severe headache vomiting double vision, slurred speech weakness/stiffness of arm/leg convulsion</p>
Head lice	<p>persistent itching infected scratch marks nits - small silvery egg cases attach to individual hairs & stick to strands of hair pubic lice - itching particularly severe at night</p>
Hepatitis B	<p>tiredness, mild fever, rash loss of appetite/weight aching muscles & joints nausea, vomiting, diarrhea changed senses of taste/smell tenderness in upper abdomen jaundice (yellow skin/eyes) dark-colored urine light-colored feces flu-like symptoms possibly no symptoms</p>
Lyme Disease	<p>skin rash at site of the bite resembles "bull's-eye" hives, redness of cheeks swelling/redness of eyes flu-like symptoms later symptoms can affect joints, nervous system & heart</p>
Measles	<p>cough, red watery eyes, runny nose followed by fever & rash usually starts on face & spreads downward spread by coughing & sneezing frequently complicated by middle ear infection and/or pneumonia</p>
Pinworms	<p>severe anal (rectal) itch nervousness & irritability during the day restlessness & difficulty sleeping at night</p>

Roundworms	stomach pain nervousness vomiting diarrhea disturbed sleep
Scarlet fever	often begins with fever, vomiting, sore throat, headache reddish rash first on chest & back then spreads to body face flushed tongue heavily coated & bumps may have peeling of skin
Strep throat	chills with fever headache, nausea & vomiting sore throat & pain swallowing possible swollen glands in neck

Minor Injuries

All staff are trained in providing basic first aid for minor injuries such as scrapes and bruises. In addition, the Program Nurse is available to respond when the injury requires more skilled treatment. Staff will document the injury on an Accident/Health Incident Report and notify the parent either by phone or with the daily communication notebook/report. When injuries occur at home, parents are asked to communicate the type of injury and circumstances under which it occurred.

Medical & Mental Health Emergencies

If the student requires medical attention, the parent will be called to pick him/her up at the Center. If needed, Center staff will accompany the parent to obtain medical treatment. If the student requires emergency medical treatment, the staff will take the student to either Hasbro Children's Hospital or the nearest emergency room. The parent will be notified to meet the student at the Hospital.

Should the student become sufficiently physically and/or mentally ill and in the professional opinion of Center staff, requires emergency hospitalization, the staff will take appropriate action, even if unable to contact the parent/guardian for prior approval.

Medications

The Program Nurse dispenses prescribed medications to students in the Day Program, according to the Department of Health's Regulations for School Health Programs. In order to dispense medications, the student's physician must have written a Medication Order for the specific drug, the parent must have signed a Medication Overview & Parent/Guardian Permission for Dispensing Medication form, and the medication must be sent in to the Center in its original container. The student's physician must also sign a PRN Physician's Medication Order – Day

Program for the Nurse to dispense over the counter medications (i.e., Tylenol, aspirin, Tums, etc.). The medication must be delivered directly to the Center by the parent, or transported by the bus driver/aid and handed directly to the Center staff. *Students must never transport their own medications.* The Program Nurse ensures that medications are properly stored and transported, and that dispensing documentation is kept on the Medication Record.

The Residential Program Nurse manages the administration of medications in the group homes. In addition to the Medication Orders and the parent permission forms, the physician must also complete a Physician's PRN Medication Order – Residential Program indicating approval for standard treatment protocol for everyday illness using over-the-counter medications. Parents are responsible for asking their physician to complete this form. Pharmacy services for residential children are coordinated by the Residence through a qualified licensed pharmacist.

Health Education

The Groden Center has developed curricula to teach all ages of students the skills they will need to maintain healthy and safe lives. These issues are presented and discussed according to appropriate developmental levels and educational needs of each student. Parents have the opportunity to review and approve the curriculum. The curriculum topics include:

- Personal Health
 - physical
 - environmental
 - mental
 - nutrition
- Safety Behaviors
- Human Growth & Development
- Sexuality
- Family Life

Safety Inspections

The Center leases its main building from the State of Rhode Island. Even though the building is old, it is spacious and located centrally in Rhode Island. The Livingston Center, which contains The Groden Center Preschool and Early Intervention Program is located on 30 Livingston Street in Providence, RI.

For the ongoing safety of staff and students, and in compliance with licensing regulations, the Center has numerous inspections.

Buildings are inspected annually by the Fire Department to make sure the fire alarm is in good working order and that 15 fire drills have been conducted each year. A fire extinguisher company comes in four (4) times a year to ensure that the extinguishers are charged and the sprinkler system is working.

The building is also inspected annually for safety by the Building Inspector and by Occupational Safety and Health Administration. Since the building is old, some pipes were covered in asbestos. These pipes were identified, sealed and marked by a licensed asbestos management company. These pipes are checked twice a year by maintenance staff trained in asbestos control and inspected every three (3) years by a licensed laboratory when air samples are also taken and analyzed.

Internally the Center also has a Safety Committee that checks each classroom, office space, common areas, etc., for small safety issues (such as windows that won't lock, snags in the carpet, etc.), on a semi-annual schedule. Each individual classroom also completes a Health & Safety Checklist form (looking at environmental safety, electrical safety, etc.) for their particular area. These are also completed in each Residence.

In addition to the above inspections, all staff are trained in health and safety issues, including basic first aid, management of infectious diseases and maintenance of their environments for the health and safety of students and staff.