

# Prettyboy Recreation Home B.A.S.E.

**2024-2025**

## Parent Handbook

Program Director:

Shelly Regars

[shellyregars@gmail.com](mailto:shellyregars@gmail.com)

Phone:

410-357-9509

Hours of Operation:

6:30am-8:30am (Monday-Friday)

3:30pm-6:00pm (Monday-Friday)

Address:

19810 Middletown Rd.

Freeland, MD 21053

Located in the Recreation Room of Prettyboy Elementary School

Prettyboy Recreation Council Chairperson

Chrissy Brandt – [chrissybrandt1@gmail.com](mailto:chrissybrandt1@gmail.com)

TAX-ID: 52-1071231

License #117702

## **WELCOME**

Thank you for choosing Home B.A.S.E. for your child. Please read this handbook thoroughly. It is important that you feel comfortable with our policies and procedures. If you have questions or concerns, please reach out to the Program Director or one of our volunteer chairpersons. We appreciate your trust in us. We look forward to spending time with your child before and/or after school.

## **ABOUT US**

The Home B.A.S.E. Program is located in the Recreation Room of Prettyboy Elementary School. Home B.A.S.E. provides before and after school care for students in grades K-5. Enrollment is not limited to the students of Prettyboy Elementary - all are welcome. Home B.A.S.E. has been an important part of the Prettyboy community for many years. Many of our staff members live in the community and some are former students! The Home B.A.S.E. Program is run through the Prettyboy Recreation Council, a 501(c)(3) non-profit volunteer organization that works with Baltimore County Recreation and Parks to provide organized recreational activities throughout the year for the families of the Prettyboy Community. Recreation Council meetings are held at 7:30pm on the second Tuesday of each month in the recreation room at Prettyboy Elementary. Parents are welcome and encouraged to attend.

## **Mission Statement and Philosophy**

Mission:

To provide exceptional childcare while fostering each child's intellectual, social, and moral development in an academic-rich environment.

Philosophy:

It is the philosophy of Home B.A.S.E. that children be encouraged to learn and grow by providing developmentally appropriate experiences where each child can succeed in a safe and loving environment. We believe that each child is an individual that is capable, curious, full of potential, and worthy of respect. Our program provides an inclusive setting that recognizes each student's abilities, interests, needs, and learning style. We promote meaningful play as an avenue to learning. It cultivates creativity, curiosity, discovery, and problem solving which allows for personal growth and the development of positive self-image. We champion risk takers and invite the sharing of ideas. Our program is child centered. We take a holistic approach by educating the whole child. We believe that developing social skills, emotional intelligence, and mindfulness are just as important as the ABCs and 123s.

Our before and after school care provides a safe, relaxed, inclusive environment where kids can prepare for the school day or relax and play after the day is done. Our staff is educated in early childhood development and trained to promote learning in a nurturing environment. They work to encourage healthy habits such as participating in outdoor physical activity, eating good snacks, and being able to socialize and get along with persons of all ages and abilities. We encourage the children to problem solve and guide them as they work through conflicts that arise.

Our Home B.A.S.E. Program is devoted to providing a secure, caring, stimulating, inclusive environment which is responsive to the needs of individual children regardless of ability, race, background, culture, religion, gender, or economic circumstances. Second only to meeting the needs of all the children in our care is safety. All staff members are first aid/CPR certified. We participate in the Prettyboy Elementary School emergency drills. We have Safety/Health and Emergency Plans in place that are reviewed annually. All staff are trained in the appropriate response.

Staff is encouraged to connect on a personal basis with every child, every day to help them develop secure, healthy relationships with adults other than their parents. We promote personal responsibility and respect for all living things so the children in our care grow up to be successful, productive, caring members of our community.

## **CURRICULUM STATEMENT**

Home B.A.S.E. operates on a philosophy of providing quality care and developmentally appropriate experiences so that every child may grow to his/her fullest potential as an individual. We provide opportunities that encourage our children to express their ideas and feelings, to develop problem solving and reasoning skills, and to enhance self-confidence.

Home B.A.S.E. serves children ages 4-12, in a before/after school capacity. We approach our care knowing that the kids will have or have had a full day of learning in school. We aim to provide fun, relaxing, social activities as they prepare for the school day or decompress and play afterwards. To this end, we implement a child centered, inclusive curriculum that encourages creativity and risk taking. We do this knowing that all kids are curious and capable of learning across all developmental domains: physical, cognitive, emotional, language, and social development. We acknowledge that all students learn at their own pace and that milestones can occur at different rates and stages in a child's development.

Curriculum can be broadly defined as the totality of student experiences that occur during the educational process. At Home B.A.S.E., we believe that it's interactive. It's everything that takes place while the students are in our care. While it certainly can be a planned sequence of instruction, for us it's so much more. It's not just academics but also the physical environment, learning materials, routines, and transitions. It encompasses our developmental and learning goals, our staff and the methods they use to teach skills. It's basically any element that aids children in learning. As stated earlier, we do not focus on academics, the main areas we address at Home B.A.S.E. are Health, Social Foundations, and Physical Education. However, we do often address the other (academic) areas when helping individuals with homework or studying.

**Our Curriculum at Home B.A.S.E. is based on our philosophy and guided by both Healthy Beginnings: Supporting Development and Learning from Birth through Three Years of Age and the Maryland Early Learning Standards. Both define the key aspects of development and learning that are the foundation for a child's academic and life-long achievement. As Early Childhood educators, we play an important role in laying that foundation and setting the stage for success. We use these standards as guidelines to develop the framework that sets our expectations for student behavior and to hold our teachers accountable. We are constantly assessing how our students are progressing towards these standards and adjust when needed.**

## **REGISTRATION**

To hold your child's spot on the roster, please complete and turn in the following:

- Registration form
- Rate/Attendance Agreement form
- Emergency form
- Parent Signature Page
- Parent's Guide to Regulated Child Care – Page 2 with signature
- Registration Fee (checks payable to PBRC) \$35/family before 2/29/24 or \$50/family after 2/29/24

In order to attend Home B.A.S.E. on Monday, August 26, 2024, the following paperwork needs to be completed and turned in by **Thursday, August 15, 2024:**

- Health Inventory Part One – completed by parent
- Health Inventory Part Two - signed by a physician and dated no earlier than 9/1/2023.
- Immunization Certificate
- Lead Testing Certificate (if applicable)
- Topical Base Care Product Administration form – if applicable
- Prescription Medication Authorization form – if applicable

**This paperwork is MANDATORY per MSDEOCC.  
All must be received in order to attend the first day.**

Parents/guardians are required to keep us informed of changes in address, telephone numbers, emails, and other pertinent information listed on any of the above forms. Please contact the Program Director to update information as needed. We recommend that you keep copies of submitted forms for your records.

Parents/guardians must inform staff if the child has ever had fever related seizures, food allergies, or any other serious medical condition. Parents are encouraged to update staff on any behavioral concerns. At the time of enrollment, we encourage our families to provide any information that will improve their child's ability to succeed in our Program including, but not limited to, IEPs or IFSPs. We know that when families share these documents, it allows the Program to work most effectively in meeting the child's individual needs.

## **HOURS OF OPERATION:**

We are open from 6:30am- 8:30am and again from 3:30pm-6:00pm. There is a \$1 per minute, per child charge for each minute after the scheduled departure time that your child is with us. Please do not attempt to enter the Recreation Room before 6:30am. Please be respectful of the staff's time and personal responsibilities. Recurring late pick-up can result in termination of service. We will make every effort to provide care on the days that BCPS closes 3 hours early for students. We will make every effort to provide care on the days that BCPS is closed for students but open for teachers. Parents will be expected to sign up for these days so we can plan ahead and staff appropriately. Extra charges may apply. **We cannot operate if the building and offices are closed.**

## **ARRIVAL & DISMISSAL**

Please do not attempt to enter the Recreation Room before 6:30am. For your child's safety, a parent or guardian must accompany the child in and out of the building each day. Please do not leave children unattended in the parking lot. Every child needs to be signed in and out on the attendance sheet with a parent signature and the time in/out. If you need help locating the attendance sheet, please ask a staff member for assistance.

Your child can't be released to anyone except those indicated on your registration paperwork. If there is an exception, we must be notified in writing and the person picking up will need to show identification. There is a \$1 per minute charge for every minute that your child is with us beyond their scheduled departure time. No one under the age of 16 is permitted to pick up your child.

## **ABSENCES**

If your child is going to be absent, please notify us by calling 410-357-9509 or emailing the Program Director at shellyregars@gmail.com. We are in the Prettyboy Elementary School, but the Main Office doesn't communicate daily absences with us. When children are absent from the center, whether due to illness or vacation, there is no reduction in tuition. If your child will be absent for an extended period, please inform the Program Director in writing as early as possible. A discussion re: tuition will follow.

## **ATTENDANCE:**

Due to MD State imposed staffing requirements, we require a 15-day notice for any changes in attendance. You must give written notice to the Program Director if your child will no longer be attending Home B.A.S.E. Otherwise, you will be invoiced and responsible for payment.

We reserve the right to terminate a child for the following reasons (but not limited to):

- Failure to pay
- Routinely late picking up your child
- Failure to complete the required forms
- Lack of parental cooperation
- Failure of child to adjust to the center after a reasonable amount of time
- Physical or verbal abuse of any person or property
- Our inability to meet your child's needs
- Lack of compliance with handbook regulations

## **DROP-INS**

Depending on staffing availability, we may be able to accommodate drop-in attendance for **enrolled** students on days/times that they would normally not attend. Parents must contact the Program Director for availability and approval.

### **Home B.A.S.E. Drop-in Rates**

\$25 per day for AM (6:30am-8:30am)

\$25 per day for PM (3:30pm-6:00pm)

\$40 per day for both AM and PM

## **CLOSINGS & DELAYS**

In the case of inclement weather, parents have several options to find out our opening status:

- Look for a group email. Please make sure we have an up to date email address for you.
- Download the “BCPS NOW” App
- Call the BCPS information line at: 443-809-5555

Home B.A.S.E. follows the closing/delay schedule for BCPS (Hereford Zone):

- BCPS, 1 hour delay: Homebase will be CLOSED for Before Care but OPEN for After Care
- BCPS, 2 hour delay: Homebase will be CLOSED for Before Care but OPEN for After Care
- BCPS, Closed: Homebase will be closed
- BCPS closes early or cancels after school activities: Homebase will close.

## **PAYMENT**

You will be billed according to the Rates/Attendance Form you submitted at registration. You will be invoiced on the 15<sup>th</sup> of every month for the following month. Payment is due on or before the 1<sup>st</sup> of each month. At 30 days past due, your child will no longer be able to attend the Program, until the balance is paid in full. Please communicate with the Director if you are experiencing financial issues. Return check fee for insufficient funds is \$25.

PBRC Home B.A.S.E. utilizes Brightwheel, a platform that allows for online payment. Once your child is registered you will be set up in Brightwheel. We will continue to take checks if that is your preferred method of payment. Checks should be made payable to Prettyboy Recreation Council (PBRC.) Checks can be placed in the Lock Box in the classroom or mailed to:

HBTT Program  
c/o PBRC  
P.O. Box 518  
Monkton, MD 21111

## **HOLIDAYS**

Home B.A.S.E. will be closed on the following holidays:

Labor Day, Election Day, Thanksgiving/Black Friday, Winter Break, New Year's Day, Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. Day, President's Day, Spring Break, Good Friday, Easter Monday, Memorial Day.

## **COMMUNICATION WITH PARENTS/GUARDIANS**

We want families to stay informed of day-to-day happenings and special events. We use the following methods of communication with parents:

- Parent Information Booth located near the front door of the Recreation Room. There is a bulletin board with useful information and the payment lockbox.
- Emails and Newsletters – These will be sent periodically to update families on the happenings of Home B.A.S.E. These will include but not be limited to policy updates, exposure to illnesses, activities added to the Calendar.
- Communication with staff at the start and end of the day are always helpful and encouraged.

## **NUTRITION AND PHYSICAL FITNESS**

At Home B.A.S.E. we value being healthy and feeling good. We know that students will perform at their highest level when eating well, sleeping well, and getting daily physical exercise. We promote keeping active. We go outside every day weather permitting. We encourage families to set consistent bedtimes, so our students are well rested.

## **SNACKS/DRINKS**

Nutritional snacks and drinks (1% milk, 100% fruit juice, water) will be provided for our PM session after school. If needed children can bring breakfast to eat during the AM session or have something from our kitchen. Families are always welcome to send in snacks if they prefer. We are committed to serving healthy options that emphasize nutrient rich foods with as little sugar as possible. Safe, fresh drinking water is always available. Staff encourages students to drink water throughout the day.

## **SUPPLIES**

No supplies are needed. Home B.A.S.E. kids are welcome to bring an activity or electronic device from home. Please use common sense for what is appropriate. **Homebase is NOT responsible for any lost, stolen, or damaged personal property. Please be sure your child is dressed appropriately each day for the weather. Whenever possible we like to spend time outdoors!**

## **ACTIVITIES**

Home B.A.S.E. kids are free to complete homework or bring an activity or electronic device from home. Please use common sense for what is appropriate. Please be sure your child is dressed appropriately each day for the weather. Whenever possible we like to spend time outdoors! The program is not responsible for lost, stolen, or damaged personal items.

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## **INJURIES**

At Home B.A.S.E. we make every effort to keep all students injury-free. Unfortunately, children fall, get scrapes and cuts, and can injure themselves sometimes without even trying. All staff is CPR/First Aid certified. We will perform basic first aid and record the event. At time of pick up, parent will be notified of the injury, cause of injury, and the staff actions following the incident. If necessary, staff will contact parents or emergency contacts. 911 may be contacted depending on the seriousness of the injury.



## **SICKNESS POLICY**

Parents agree to keep their child home or seek alternative care arrangements for the following conditions:

- Pain – any complaints of unexplained or undiagnosed pain
- Fever of 99°F/37.2°C or higher
- Sore throat or trouble swallowing
- Unusual or unexplained headache or stiff neck
- 3 unexplained diarrheas or loose stool in close increments
- Nausea, vomiting, or abdominal cramps
- Severe itching of scalp or body
- Known or suspected communicable diseases
- Any discharge/drainage from eyes, nose, ears. If a child has pinkeye/conjunctivitis, they need to have been on antibiotic/drop treatment for **24 hours** before returning.
- Open sores such as those seen in children with Chicken Pox or Hand, Foot, Mouth Disease. Child needs to be free from blisters/sores or these blisters/sores need to be completely scabbed over before returning.

When a child becomes ill while in our care, we will make the child comfortable in a quiet place away from other children. Here the child can rest and be closely supervised. Parents will be notified immediately and agree to begin making alternate work arrangements or arrangements for alternative care. If your child is seriously ill, you or an alternate must come for the child IMMEDIATELY. If we cannot reach the parent, we will call an emergency contact given at time of registration. 911 may be contacted depending on the seriousness of the illness. **Children must be free from fever, vomiting, and diarrhea for 24 hours before returning to Home B.A.S.E.**

**PLEASE SEE OUR COVID PROTOCOLS**

## **MEDICATION ADMINISTRATION**

At Home B.A.S.E. several of our staff members are certified to administer medications. For a child to be given either a prescription or OTC medication, parents need to complete the proper paperwork. All forms are on the Prettyboy Recreation Council website. All medications are to be brought in by the parent and labeled with the child's first and last names. Prescription medication requires a signature from the prescribing physician. We prefer that medications are given at home but if they can't be, we are happy to help. Please know that we can only administer one dose of medication per day.

## **HEAD LICE POLICY**

If a child is found to have head lice, the parents/guardians will be notified, and the child will need to be picked up immediately. The child will only be readmitted to the program after the staff determines that treatment has been effective, typically 48 hours once treatment began. There are several products on the market that can be used to kill head lice. Some are OTC and others are prescription strength. It is recommended that all members of the household be treated.

## **BASIC HEALTH AND SAFETY**

Our Program is dedicated to keeping our staff and students safe and healthy. We have a Health Plan in place to ensure that all employees understand their part. It addresses not only how we obtain student and staff health history but how staff are to deal with illnesses, injuries, infectious diseases, first aid, administering medication, hand washing, safely handling food, and record keeping. In addition to being trained on our Health Program, all employees are required to take the MSDEOCC approved course, "Basic Health and Safety Training." Per the MSDEOCC, employees will now take this course annually.

## **EMERGENCY PREPAREDNESS**

Several staff members have taken the MSDEOCC approved course, "Emergency Preparedness in Childcare." We have an Emergency Plan in place. It addresses the various types of safety drills we participate in with Prettyboy Elementary School. Each employee is trained on our Emergency Plan and will be expected to follow the procedures. This plan is kept in our "Ready to Go" bag. Parents are encouraged to ask questions as they arise.

## **SUSPECTED ABUSE OR NEGLECT**

In accordance with the procedures set forth in the Abused and Neglected Child Reporting Act, any staff member having reasonable cause to believe that a child known to him/her in a professional capacity may be an abused or neglected child shall immediately report the matter to the Program Director. Oral and written reports will be made to the proper authorities. All our staff are mandated reporters.

## **CHILD CUSTODY**

If only one parent has custody of a child, the center must be notified immediately upon enrollment. If the non-custodial parent is unauthorized to pick up the child, the custodial parent must inform the Program Director and provide a certified copy of the court order confirming that one parent doesn't have visitation rights. Without such a court order the law grants parents joint custody and the center isn't allowed to refuse the release of the child to either parent. If there is a restraining order that involves the child, please ensure that a copy is given to the Program Director at time of enrollment.

## **VISITORS**

Parents of our students are always welcome to stop by and see our program in action. Employees of Baltimore County Recreation and Parks and any member of the Prettyboy Recreation Council are also welcome at any time. These visits are to be conducted in such a manner as to not disrupt the daily operations of Home B.A.S.E. All others need to clear their visit through the Program Director or our volunteer chairperson. All visits are to be pre-approved and entered in our Visitor Logbook.

## **PHOTOGRAPHS**

Throughout the school year our staff will be taking pictures and possible videos that may be put on our social media page or used for marketing and advertising. Families may decline to have their child included in these photos/videos by indicating this preference on our Parent Signature Page.

## **Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990/2009**

The ADA is a civil rights law that prohibits discrimination based on disability or special health needs in all areas of life including education and childcare. The purpose of the law was to ensure that persons with disabilities or special health needs would have equal opportunities and enjoy the same rights as everyone else. Employees are required to take the MSDEOCC approved course, "Including All Children and the ADA." The Program is dedicated to making all children feel included. We will make accommodations as necessary to see that all our students can learn and play safely. At time of enrollment we encourage families to share IEPs or IFPSs if their child has one. All staff will follow the individualized plan. We will work with any therapists or special educators involved.

## **TRAINING**

We have a diverse staff with each member bringing something different to the team. Some of our staff hold degrees in Early Childhood Education and Special Education. Some have been working with children of all ages for many years. All staff participate in taking yearly Continuing Education classes and are expected to use what they know regarding Child Development to enable them to find strategies on how to improve the learning process. First and foremost, we focus on the whole child by addressing physical, emotional, social, and cognitive skills. Children are unique and learn in various ways and at different paces. Oftentimes a child may excel in one area and struggle in another. Teachers/Aides are expected to provide experiences that include all learning modalities and accommodate individual students. Activities should be age appropriate and balance both teacher-directed and child-lead lessons. It is our responsibility to help all students improve their social competence and build self-esteem. A young child's development has a direct effect on their overall development and on the adult they will become. Our staff is dedicated to investing in the young kids in our care to maximize their future well-being.

## **STATE LICENSING REQUIREMENTS**

Home B.A.S.E. is fully licensed and complies with all applicable licensing regulations and standards. These standards relate to our location, staff, health, safety procedures, nutrition, care giver to child ratios, and record keeping. We believe that these standards are in the best interest of the children. The Home B.A.S.E. rooms are subject to inspection by state and city health, fire, and licensing officials. All childcare in Maryland is regulated by the Maryland State Department of Education, Office of Child Care's (OCC) Licensing Branch. For more information on this please follow this link to the Maryland State Department of Education's pamphlet on *A Guide to Regulated Child Care*:

[https://earlychildhood.marylandpublicschools.org/system/files/filedepot/2/guide\\_to\\_regulated\\_child\\_care.pdf](https://earlychildhood.marylandpublicschools.org/system/files/filedepot/2/guide_to_regulated_child_care.pdf)

## **CHILD CARE SCHOLARSHIPS**

We are pleased to announce our participation in the Maryland Child Care Scholarship Program. This Program provides financial assistance with childcare costs to eligible working families in Maryland. This program is managed through a centralized vendor – Child Care Subsidy Central (CSC Central.) For more information or to see if you qualify, go to this website:

<https://earlychildhood.marylandpublicschools.org/node/620>

## **MD EXCELS**

Home B.A.S.E. participates in MD Excels. It is a voluntary program for licensed childcare and early education programs. Being a participant shows our continuous commitment to meet standards that **exceed** the state's licensing requirements. Research shows that quality childcare and early learning experiences provide the building blocks for life-long learning. Early childhood professionals play a crucial role in creating the stable foundation that children need to be successful. As a MD Excels participant, we commit to quality by engaging in an ongoing process of self-evaluation and improvement. MD Excels focuses on the following content areas:

- Licensing and Compliance
- Staff Qualifications and Professional Development
- Accreditation and Rating Scales
- Developmentally Appropriate Learning and Practice
- Administrative Policies and Practices.

As of January 2020, Maryland has 4,712 participating programs and providers - 4,202 with published quality ratings. We are proud to be one of them.

## **SKILLS ASSESSMENT**

At Home B.A.S.E. we do not assess, score, or report on academics. As a before and after school program we focus more on our children's Health, Physical Education, and Social Foundations. We provide a variety of activities and experiences that challenge our kids to act and react appropriately, take risks, problem solve, and socialize with others of different ages and abilities. The staff regularly interacts with the students of Home B.A.S.E. making observations and discussing right from wrong. Each student is seen as an individual. We work with each child to ensure that they are growing socially and can handle themselves in a variety of situations.

## **Screen Time Policy**

At Home B.A.S.E. we take a personal interest in the health and wellbeing of the children in our care. As a result, we follow the recommendations of the American Pediatric Academy on Screen Time.

- Children ages 2-5 should watch no more than 1 hour per day total of high-quality programs. Adults should co-view with children to help them understand what they are seeing and apply it to the real world around them.
- Children ages 6 and older, should have consistent limits on the time spent in front of screens. Time spent should not take the place of adequate sleep, physical activity, and other behaviors essential to good health.

In our case, “Screen Time” refers to television/DVDs, personal cell phones, and tablets that students bring to school. Home B.A.S.E. understands that television and other electronic devices can get in the way of exploring, playing, and interacting with others which encourages learning and healthy physical and social development. Therefore, we will restrict Screen Time by:

- Allowing our after-care students ages 6 and older to use cell phones or tablets under strict supervision and with parent permission. Time allowed is limited to the last hour of care.
- Not allowing any Screen Time during meals and snacks.

We do not rely on television/DVDs, cell phones, or tablets to fill space in our daily schedule. Weather permitting, we go outside every day to play on our playground equipment, sport courts, and fields.

**We will continue to encourage our families to designate media-free times together, such as dinner or driving, as well as media-free locations in the home, such as bedrooms. We believe in having ongoing communication about online citizenship and safety, including treating others with respect online as well as off. We know that this generation of kids and adolescents is growing up immersed in media. It can harm the amount and quality of sleep a person gets. Problems arise when media replaces physical activity, hands-on exploration, and face-to-face social interaction in the real world, which is critical to learning. Because of this we will always promote old school play over media use.**

## **COMMUNITY RESOURCES**

The families we serve live in Northern Baltimore County. Nearby are several parks and nature centers. There are also many family friendly, child-centered museums and businesses not too far away. The state of Maryland offers many resources and opportunities for families with children with special needs or disabilities. There are also public and private agencies available to help families concerned with developmental delays or behavioral issues. We have developed a list of these resources. The document will be emailed to families at the beginning of the school year and hard copies are available in our Parent Information Booth. We encourage our families to take advantage of these resources.

# **BEHAVIOR/DISCIPLINE POLICY**

The early childhood years are an important time in a child's social and emotional development. Every moment is a challenge to appropriately act or react and make good choices. The word "discipline" has, at its root meaning, "instruction" or "training." This meaning rather than punishment is the foundation of our approach to behavior management. We accept that kids will sometimes display their emotions or try to achieve their goals in unproductive or immature ways. It's natural and just part of being a child. Much of a child's most valuable learning occurs during behavioral problem-solving.

At Home B.A.S.E. we believe in establishing consistent, easy to understand, age appropriate limits. When these are present, children increasingly become more responsible and self-reliant. We also believe in having adults who respond to inappropriate behavior with insight, sensitivity, and skill. When improper behaviors occur, we believe that it's important for the child to understand why the behavior was inappropriate and how to modify it. We see misbehaviors as our opportunity to teach kids the social, emotional, and communication skills necessary to manage themselves, resolve conflict, prevent bullying, and develop pro-social behaviors.

Our staff sees working with challenging behaviors as part of our job. Guidance is always positive, productive, and immediate. Discipline, when properly practiced, uses a multi-faceted approach that teaches and reinforces desired behaviors. We focus on:

- Modeling – As adults if we can accept, control, and express our feelings in a direct, non-aggressive way, it shows children that it's possible and can be done.
- Encouragement – We encourage our children to be kind, helpful, and caring with each other. We encourage our children to treat others as they want to be treated. We encourage the acceptance of the opinions of others. We celebrate being different from each other.
- Empathy – We strive to help our children see things from different perspectives. We teach that everyone has feelings and that we don't always respond to situations the same way.
- Assertiveness – We want our children to be confident. We work on developing a positive self-image. We promote self-respect and self-love. We teach children that they can set boundaries for themselves and that others need to respect those boundaries. We practice "using our words" when they feel as if someone has pushed too far.
- Composure – Staying calm and in control of oneself is a lifelong skill that we address every day. There are a multitude of things that can throw a child over the edge, making them angry or sad. Using attentive observation, we can often intervene to guide children before situations escalate. We help kids verbalize feelings, frustrations, and concerns.
- Conflict Resolution – When situations do escalate, we empower our children to walk away and go to our "Thinking Space" to calm down and regain composure. This is NOT a time out, rather an opportunity to learn breathing techniques, positive self-talk, and the ability to calm down on their own. We want our kids to think through the situation that has occurred and discuss what they could have done differently to promote a better result.
- Accountability – We often tell our children that "No one is perfect. Making mistakes is part of being human." We support admitting mistakes, making apologies, and trying to do better. Sometimes children act out purposefully. In this case we address the inappropriate behavior and stress that every choice has a consequence. Consequences can be gratifying or awful. We challenge kids to learn from their mistakes and make more favorable choices.
- Choices – We teach that every day is full of decision making. Impulse control and delaying gratification are discussed openly. We help children see that it sometimes takes a while to achieve goals and that productive choices and perseverance do pay off.

When duly implemented, discipline helps children learn and internalize the lifelong skills of self-motivation, self-control, competence, and empathy. Our staff is dedicated to helping the children in our care learn to manage themselves so they will become happy, productive members of our community. When a pattern of behavior persists that endangers self, others, or property or significantly disrupts our Program, we will work with the child's family to find solutions, up to and including referral for outside services or exclusion from the Program.

## **Family Engagement**

At Home B.A.S.E. we see families as essential partners in the education of the children in our care. Our before and after school programs are designed to ease the transition from home to school and back again. We actively engage the children in social settings allowing them to build self-confidence and the skills needed to socialize with people of all ages and abilities. We encourage families to make a commitment to actively support their child's learning and development.

Family engagement is not a single event. It's a shared responsibility in which regular, two-way communication ensures that the student is on track to meet grade-level requirements. Effective family engagement involves building trust. Through encouragement and caring we can affect the well-being of both child and family in a very positive way. It is a collaborative and strengths-based process through which early childhood staff, families, and kids build relationships that are productive and goal-orientated.

We invite Home B.A.S.E. families to:

- Complete the MDESOC "All About Me" form so we can learn more about their child.
- Participate in our "Parent's Night Out" events in December and February. We offer free childcare, dinner, and entertainment so that parents can holiday shop or go on a Valentine's Day date without kids in tow.
- Participate in our monthly fundraisers/Community Service Projects.
- Answer our End-of-the-Year survey to help us determine what is working well and what needs improvement.

At Home B.A.S.E. we acknowledge that the parents are the child's first teachers. We respect each family's parenting style, culture, and religion. We focus on building long term, trusted relationships which both family and staff will lean on if difficult situations arise. We work together with families to ensure that their child is happy, healthy, and learning the social skills needed to be productive members of our community.

## **CLOSING**

At Home B.A.S.E. we acknowledge that the parents are the child's first teachers. We respect each family's parenting style, culture, and religion. We focus on building long term, trusted relationships which both family and staff will lean on if difficult situations arise. We work together with families to ensure that their child is happy, healthy, and learning both the academic and social skills needed to be productive members of our community.