

Willamalane Parent Handbook Evaluation

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Introduction

The Willamalane Park and Recreation District were constructed in 1972 in Springfield, Oregon. The district holds opportunities and sources of enjoyment for present and future generations. The park was aimed to maintain Dorris Ranch's unique culture, historical background, and recreational resources. The park faced several conflicts on issues like the preservation of wild habitat, historic preservation, and agricultural purposes. The district offers various programs for kids and adults that include after-school classes, summer camps, sports and training, and sports events for adults. The programs the district offers for adults include animal training, music, art, language, history, and dance classes, as well as indoor and outdoor fitness training.

The Willamalane Early Childhood Parent Handbook of the year 2016-17 is aimed to provide a safe and secure environment for children that is both educational and recreational. The handbook aims to increase children's creative skills while allowing them to enjoy their time in a safe and secure environment. The handbook acts as a guide to how we can create a children-friendly environment that has all the things that are of interest to children. It is a collection of activities that are formulated by considering the development levels of children and the skills that child has to learn, but the activities are designed in a way that is understandable, convenient, interesting, and affordable for parents and children. The handbook can be used as a guide for activities that are both academic and recreational for children and provides the safety measures that are linked to those activities. ("Early Childhood Parent Handbook," 2018)

This paper aims to provide an evaluation of the Willamalane Early Childhood Parent Handbook of the year 2016-17; it will discuss its pros and cons, its standards of programming for children of various ages, and the level of family engagement in the programs.

Discussion

The Willamalane handbook is an excellent example of what a parent handbook should be like. The handbook mentions the necessary policies, procedures, and regulations that are required to be followed in such an environment. The coming paragraphs will provide a critical analysis of the policies and procedures and will provide the pros and cons of the handbook.

Pros

The check-in/check-out policies listed in the handbook about the strict timing schedule of children's pick and drop and the schedule of all the classes in the center are strictly to be followed, and center fines for any changes in the schedule of early pickup or drop off. This policy encourages parents to be on time to follow the schedules and helps avoid mismanagement in case a child is left in the center after his pickup time. This policy is beneficial as it provides security for children and their timely pick and drop. The emergency enclosure policy helps in avoiding clashes between the time schedules of the students. If any class has extended timings or finishes before its time, the next classes and their schedules are maintained accordingly. This policy avoids clashes between the classes. As the timings of classes and their schedule changes are uploaded online and alert messages are delivered to parents, the chance of clashes is minimal.

The criminal record checks of all employees and parent volunteers ensure the safety of children and also comply with the child security laws of the state. The center takes good care of children's needs. The children are required to bring extra clothing and snacks with them every day, which is an intelligent approach by the center as they do not have to prepare lunch for every child. The center's non-violence policy ensures that no child is threatened physically or verbally, and this maintains a positive learning environment that is both friendly and recreational. This policy protects every child and ensures that no one is hurt physically. It restricts any symbolism of hate speech or violence, thus protecting every child's physical and intellectual identity.

Cons

The handbook is missing some features that, as a child learning and recreating center, should have been added. The handbook has no management or control policy if a certain child suddenly falls ill. There is no mention of a procedure that is to be followed by the center authorities if a child becomes unconscious, gets injured, or has any other medical emergency. There is no reference to how parents will be contacted and what methods are followed to ensure children's health. The handbook has no fire safety policy, and there is no procedure defined in case a fire erupts in the building, camps, or sleeping areas of the children. Emergency services and ambulance services are no doubt efficient enough to control the situation, but parents should have knowledge of who they have to contact in such cases and how their children will be found in emergency situations.

The handbook is missing the credentials, experience, subjects, timings, and other important details of the appointed teachers, which restricts parents who can contact them when they observe the learning of their child in a subject that is not suitable. By far, the most important issue with this handbook is that it does not address infants, toddlers, and preschool children separately. The center assumes that all children can take care of themselves and that there is no need for instructor supervision. There is no inclusion of procedures that differentiate how toddlers or infants will be treated, as they are the ones who need the most attention and special behavior. Neither does the handbook address any

procedure for making multi-age groups. The absence of multi-age grouping restricts children from learning from each other.

The handbook should contain procedures that define these missing features as they are essential for any learning environment setting. (Pianta & Sheridan, 2015; “Culturally Responsive Family Engagement Practices,” 2018) The following improvements are needed in the handbook:

- A management and control procedure in case of sudden illness, medical emergency, or unconsciousness.
- A disaster management plan should be developed to deal with catastrophes in the center. Children should be trained in how they are supposed to react in case of a hurricane, fire, earthquake, or any other kind of disaster. The center should have trained professionals for this purpose and should include drills in their center for students’ education.
- The handbook should contain all the information on teachers and their subjects for reference.
- The book should contain information on how the center will deal with infants and toddlers and should explain how they will manage multi-age grouping as it is necessary for student learning.

Need For High-Quality Standards For Infants And Toddlers

The handbook can use the following improvements to ensure high-quality standards for infants and toddlers:

- Physical development is essential for toddlers. The environment of the center should be organized so that the children can move easily and use their muscles to improve mind-to-muscle coordination. As the growing age of children needs their development of physical coordination, the center should be designed to favor the physical improvement of toddlers, and it should be referenced in the handbook on how children will engage in physical activities.
- The handbook should contain information on how infants will learn to interact with people around them in the center. It should have plans for center-based and home-based activities that improve the social self of a child and help him understand the importance of making friends. This inclusion will introduce caring behavior in infants, and they can learn to share things with kids around them.
- The handbook should include how they will improve the cognitive and language skills of the students. The environment of the center should be encouraging for students to be curious about their environment and ask questions about it. It should have methods or activities that the center will use to improve their language skills and put them to use in their daily life.

Culturally Responsive Family Engagement

The handbook has references to how family engagement will be introduced in students’ learning programs. The program does not directly involve parents in student learning, but they can volunteer

themselves for various activities in the center. For voluntary involvement, parents have to comply with Oregon Child Care Division Regulations that are provided by the state and must be followed in any learning environment for children. The family members, after going through their background check, can participate in various activities like field trip participation and material preparation for activities. The family engagement in the center can be improved by building relationships and asking questions from center authority about their learning environment. Parents should understand that cultural diversity in its most accurate form is not possible, and there can be some cultural differences for their child in the center's educational methods. The center can have the participation of culturally diverse families in the activities, help participate in center improvement events, and perform center-family organized activities that will be both enjoyable and effective for the learning of their children.

Conclusion

In short, the Willamalane handbook qualifies for the title of a good parent handbook. It has enough information on how the center has developed procedures and policies to ensure that children learn in a perfectly safe, clean, and enjoyable learning environment. The handbook, however, misses some aspects, like high-quality standards for toddlers and emergency management plans. Overall, the handbook has a professional nature and covers most of the basic requirements of an early childhood parent handbook.

References

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