



2025-2026

Family Handbook

Partnering with Families
to Help Children Grow

2025-2026 Family Handbook

Important School Information

School Location: _____ Phone #: _____

Teachers/Home Visitor: _____

Arrival: _____ Departure: _____

Bus Number: _____ Bus Staff: _____

Family Advocate: _____ Phone#: _____

Emergency Evacuation Location & Address:

Weekly Home Visits (day/time): _____
(Home Visiting Only)

Schedule of Operations:

- Preschool class time: 8:30 a.m. to 3:30 p.m.
- Infant/Toddler class time: 8:30 a.m. to 4:00 p.m.
- Central / Administration Office: Open 8:00 a.m. – 4:30 p.m.
775 Hazen Street,
Paw Paw, MI 49009
269-657-2581

2025-2026 Family Handbook

Board Meeting Dates			Policy Council Meeting Dates	
Thursday, 3:00pm	August 28, 2025		Wednesday, 5:30pm	August 27, 2025
Thursday, 3:00pm	October 23, 2025		Wednesday, 5:30pm	October 22, 2025
Thursday, 3:00pm	November 20, 2025		Wednesday, 5:30pm	November 19, 2025
Thursday, 3:00pm	January 22, 2026		Wednesday, 5:30pm	January 21, 2026
Thursday, 3:00pm	March 26, 2026		Wednesday, 5:30pm	March 25, 2026
Wednesday, 2:30pm	June 17, 2026		Wednesday, 2:30pm	June 17, 2026
Holidays	Agency Closed		Staff Development Days	Classrooms Closed
Labor Day	September 1, 2025		September 2025	9/12, 9/26
Indigenous Peoples' Day	October 13, 2025		October 2025	10/10, 10/13, 10/24
Veterans Day	November 11, 2025		November 2025	11/7, 11/21
Thanksgiving Break	November 24-28, 2025		December 2025	12/5, 12/12
Winter Break	December 19, 2024 - January 3, 2026		January 2026	1/5, 1/16, 1/30
Martin Luther King Jr. Day	January 19, 2026		February 2026	2/13, 2/27
Presidents' Day	February 16, 2026		March 2026	3/13, 3/27
Spring Break	March 30-April 3, 2026		April 2026	4/10, 4/24
Memorial Day	May 25, 2026		May 2026	5/8, 5/15, 5/29
Juneteenth	June 19, 2026		June 2026	6/5, 6/12, 6/26
Summer Break	June 29-July 3, 2026		July 2026	7/10, 7/17, 7/24, 7/31
			August 2026	8/7

2025-2026 Family Handbook

Dear Families,

Welcome to Flowers Early Learning! We are so happy to have you join our community—and are even more excited to welcome you into our school family. Thank you for choosing us to be part of your child's early learning journey.

For over 50 years, our program has helped children get a strong start and supported families in building bright futures. Flowers Early Learning is different from traditional childcare. We offer high-quality early learning experiences in classrooms supported by early childhood professionals. Our focus is on play-based learning, building strong relationships, and helping every child grow in all areas of development.

We also believe families are leaders. As a parent or caregiver, you have a voice in our program through Family Committees and our Policy Council. These groups help guide our decisions and make sure our work reflects the needs of our families and community.

In this handbook, you'll find helpful information about our services, schedules, and ways we support your child and family. We look forward to working with you to help your child learn, grow, and thrive.

Thank you for being part of the Flowers Early Learning family. Together, we are planting the seeds of the future.

Warmly,
Chanda Hillman
CEO/Executive Director

2025-2026 Family Handbook

Table of Contents

Important School Information	2
Mission Statement, Vision, and Philosophy	7
Our Promise to You	7
Our Pedagogy...(the method and teaching practices Flowers Early Learning uses in classrooms)	7
Important Information	8
Employment Opportunities	8
Enrollment Opportunities	8
Locations	9
Program Governance	10
Education Services	11
Flowers Early Learning students learn	11
Your Child’s Development	12
Classroom Daily Schedule	12
Classroom Home Visits and Conferences	13
Celebrations	13
Curriculum	13
Dress Code	14
Home-Based Home Visits	14
“Skill Builders” for classroom students	15
Family Services – Attendance, Enrollment, Family Advocates, Resources	16
Attendance	16
Late Pick Up	17
Criteria for Enrollment	17
Withdrawal from program	18
Tuition Information/Fee Policy (<i>Private pay only</i>)	18
Custody Matters	19
Family Engagement	20
Language Services Department	21
Resource Book	22
Weather and Closures	22

2025-2026 Family Handbook

Health and Mental Health Services..... 23

 Accidents/Injury 23

 Discipline Policy 23

 Emergency Procedures 24

 Facility Cleaning and Sanitizing Procedures..... 24

 Health Exams 24

 Hygiene..... 25

 Illness..... 25

 Lead Poisoning..... 27

 Medication Procedure 27

 Mental Health..... 27

 Nutrition 27

 Non-Discrimination Statement 29

 Outdoor Activity Restrictions 29

 Special Needs..... 29

Transportation Services..... 30

 General Transportation Information 30

 Bus Routes 30

 Transportation Concerns 31

 Self-Transportation 31

Volunteer Policy 31

 Regular Volunteers: (four hours per week for more than two consecutive weeks) 32

 Volunteer Training and Development 32

 What you can do in the classroom..... 32

 In-Kind/Non-Federal Share..... 33

General Information..... 33

Standards of Conduct 33

 Child Abuse and Neglect 35

 Licensing and Safety..... 36

 Pictures, Video, and Cell Phone Policy 39

 Sharing of Data and Protections for the Privacy of Child Records at Flowers Early Learning 39

2025-2026 Family Handbook

Mission Statement, Vision, and Philosophy

Our Mission...

To build a future where children, families, and communities thrive.

Our Vision...

Every child dreams fearlessly, creating a world of endless possibilities.

Our Philosophy...

Rooted in strong, nurturing relationships, we believe that children thrive when families thrive. Our whole family approach honors each family's unique journey and walks alongside them as trusted partners in growth and discovery. We prioritize social-emotional learning as the foundation for school readiness and lifelong success- empowering children to build confidence, empathy, and resilience. We prioritize inclusive, transformative early learning experiences and deep community connections, we help children and families dream fearlessly and grow a future full of possibility.

Our Promise to You...

At Flowers Early Learning we believe that all children have the right to learning opportunities that help them achieve their full potential as engaged learners and valued members of society. Thus, our Flowers Early Learning team members have a professional obligation to create a sense of belonging. They do this best when they are effectively supported by the early learning setting in which they work and when they and their wider communities embrace diversity and full inclusion as strengths, uphold fundamental principles of fairness and justice, and work to eliminate structural inequalities that limit equitable learning opportunities.

(Our position statement is an adaptation of NAEYC's, "Advancing Equity in Early Childhood Education" position statement)

Our Pedagogy...(the method and teaching practices Flowers Early Learning uses in classrooms)

At Flowers Early Learning, we believe an intentionally designed space can inspire and guide students ages 0-5. Using the High Scope curriculum as our foundation we draw inspiration from both Reggio-Emilia and Montessori approaches. Building trust and loving relationships is the cornerstone of our practices. Our classrooms support social-emotional wellness using the Conscious Discipline method. Our safe and open-ended classrooms are intentionally designed to allow students to explore, grow and build developmental skills. Using loose parts, real items for play, and natural elements, we provide experiences for problem-solving and critical thinking. At Flowers Early Learning, we are responsive to students' ideas and culture by ensuring the environment reflects and respects individuals, families, and the communities they live in.

2025-2026 Family Handbook

Important Information

Employment Opportunities

At Flowers Early Learning we love to welcome families of enrolled students to our Flowers workforce. In the event of vacancies, parents/guardians are welcome and invited to apply. Job postings can be found on the Flowers Early Learning Website www.FlowersEarlyLearning.org and on our social media outlets. Flowers staff also share open positions with families as they are available. We also offer educational and credential assistance, so please reach out even if you don't qualify right now.

Before you apply, try volunteering in the classroom. Hands-on experience with your child's preschool or infant/toddler class and teaching staff is an excellent way to find out if early childhood education is the right field for YOU!

Enrollment Opportunities

Refer Expectant Parents and Families with Young Children to Flowers Early Learning
Flowers Early Learning is always accepting online interest forms for children from birth to age 4 and expectant mothers. If you have a friend, a neighbor, or a family member who needs preschool, prenatal, or early childhood services, please encourage them to call Flowers Early Learning at 269-657-2581 or visit our website www.FlowersEarlyLearning.org and click the "Flowers Early Learning Intake Form" link to complete the online interest form. From there, a Family Advocate will contact them to schedule a date to complete the application paperwork.

2025-2026 Family Handbook

Locations

ADMINISTRATIVE OFFICE (HSO) 775 Hazen St. Paw Paw, MI 49079 PH: 269-657-2581 Fax: 800-834-2500 or 269-657-6608	BANGOR ANNEX <i>Preschool and Infant/Toddler</i> 305 W. Douglass St. Bangor, MI 49013 PH: 269-427-4020	BENTON HARBOR (DEC) <i>Preschool and Infant/Toddler</i> 465 S. McCord Benton Harbor, MI 49022 PH: 269-757-0030
CASSOPOLIS <i>Infant/Toddler</i> 725 Center St. Cassopolis, MI 49031 PH: 269-228-5828	DECATUR <i>Preschool</i> 405 Harrison St. Decatur, MI 49045 PH: 269-423-9661	DOWAGIAC <i>Preschool</i> 203 S. Paul Dowagiac, MI 49047 PH: 269-782-2983
GOBLES <i>Preschool</i> 409 N. State St. Gobles, MI 49055 PH: 269-628-5083	MATTAWAN <i>Preschool</i> 56920 Murray St. Mattawan, MI 49071 PH: 269-668-3361	MILLBURG <i>Preschool, Infant/Toddler, Home Based</i> 4821 North St. Benton Harbor, MI 49022 Phone: 269-849-8490
NEW BUFFALO <i>Preschool, Infant/Toddler</i> 704 W. Merchant St. New Buffalo, MI 49117 PH: 269-586-3921	NILES <i>Preschool</i> 1830 South Third St. Niles, MI 49120 PH: 269-684-6010	PAW PAW CEDAR ST. <i>Preschool</i> 555 Cedar St. Paw Paw, MI 49079 PH: 269-415-5729
SOUTHWESTERN MICHIGAN COLLEGE (SMC) <i>Preschool</i> 58900 Cherry Grove Dowagiac, MI 49047 PH: 269-782-4593	SOUTH HAVEN <i>Preschool</i> 500 Elkenburg St. South Haven, MI 49090 PH: 269-637-0540	SPINKS <i>Preschool</i> 1720 S. Park Rd Benton Harbor, MI 49022 PH: 269-944-4119
WATERVLIET <i>Preschool, Infant/Toddler</i> 188 Lucinda Lane Watervliet, MI 49098 PH: 269-201-7247		

2025-2026 Family Handbook

Program Governance

You are valued and needed, you have an important voice, and your involvement makes a difference for your child. Flowers Early Learning *needs you!*

Flowers Early Learning could not exist without tremendous involvement and interest in the program. Parents and caregivers are the most important participants in the program as they are their child's first and most important teacher.

Family Committee

All parents and caregivers are automatically a member of the Family Committee at your child's school. Family Committees are established at the beginning of the year. Look for information about the meeting time and location at your school location! Each school location elects a Family Committee Chair/Policy Council representative to represent the school located at the Policy Council meetings and to lead the Family Committee meetings, and a Family Committee Vice-Chair who will become the Policy Council Representative if the elected representative cannot fulfill their duties.

Policy Council

The Policy Council (PC) is a critical part of all programs using Head Start funding. The Policy Council is part of the governing body of the program and acts as the family's voice in making major decisions for the program. It is comprised of parents or caregivers of currently enrolled students who are elected at each school, as well as representatives of our community.

The Policy Council works in partnership with key administrative staff and the governing Board of Tri-County Council for Child Development to ensure that families have the opportunity to be involved in shared decision-making regarding Flowers Early Learning program operation, grants, and policies.

Childcare and transportation will be provided or reimbursed for elected Policy Council representatives for in-person meetings. All families are welcome to attend the meetings.

Resolving Community and Family Concerns

Flowers Early Learning values all input from the community and families, and it is important that when a concern is brought to our attention, it is responded to immediately to ensure it is quickly resolved.

Community and families, please use the following procedure:

1. The concern should first be discussed with the teacher or home visitor. Any concerns regarding the health and safety of a student need to be discussed immediately.
2. If the concern is not resolved with a teacher or home visitor, the family or community member may express concerns to the Preschool Director, then the Education Director, then CEO.
3. If the concern is not resolved with the teacher, home visitor, or Preschool Director, the family or community member may express concerns in writing to the Policy Council (PC) representative that represents them. These concerns will be brought before the Policy Council. The PC representative will contact individuals with the outcome.

2025-2026 Family Handbook

Education Services

Flowers Early Learning students learn...

- **reading, writing and communicating** through a wide variety of experiences. Students learn to recognize and use written symbols on labels, charts, graphs, personal books, signs, and pictures. They learn about letter names and sounds.
- concepts related to **mathematics**. Students practice classifying, ordering, patterning, and counting with many kinds of materials. They use numbers in games, projects, charts and graphs, measuring, songs, and more.
- to be active **problem solvers** as they use all kinds of materials to experiment and explore. Activities offer opportunities to try out ideas, make observations, and do experiments. Interesting projects from making mixtures to testing magnets to growing plants engage children's curiosity.
- to use their natural **creativity**. Students explore art, music, movement, and drama. We provide a wide variety of materials for expressing creative ideas and feelings. Children's ideas are respected and valued.
- Students will practice **fine motor** skills with manipulative toys, loose parts, playdough, and art materials. Children will exercise their developing **gross motor skills** in activities planned to challenge their coordination and strength.
- **independence** by making choices and decisions. Students learn self-help skills – hand washing, tooth brushing, serving themselves at snack and lunch, dressing skills, cleaning up, and so on are practiced so often they become routine.
- to develop **positive relationships** with other children and adults. Students learn about **resolving conflicts**, and to express their feelings.
- **about other cultures and traditions**. Students will learn and celebrate there are many differences and similarities among people the world over.
- **health and safety**. Students develop awareness about many topics including fire, poisons, and abuse prevention. They learn about **nutrition** and participate in gardening and cooking activities.

2025-2026 Family Handbook

Your Child's Development

At the beginning of the school year or when your child starts at Flowers Early Learning teachers and families will complete two screenings, Ages and Stages Social-Emotional, and the Ages and Stages Developmental assessments. These screenings give us baseline knowledge of each student's developmental and social skills. These screenings can also help to determine if a student may need additional classroom support.

We use research-based valid and reliable Child Assessment systems to assess student progress throughout the year. Teachers observe students and plan intentional activities to assess student skills. Your child's teacher will finalize their observations three times a year (four for Infant/Toddlers). They will share your child's progress report with you at a conference and partner with you to build your child's skills. You may also request time to talk about your child's progress at any time. Flowers Early Learning teachers are trained in the assessment system and receive support and coaching as needed or requested.

We track growth in the five domains of learning as aligned with the Head Start Early Learning Outcomes Framework.

Classroom Daily Schedule

Both Preschool and Infant/Toddler classrooms follow a daily routine. We know that children thrive in a predictable environment. We also know things happen and there might be times the routines cannot always be followed, due to the needs of students. Teachers will develop their classroom routines based on the needs and interests of their students. They will adjust the routine based on the needs of students. Each classroom participates in the following activities:

Morning Message: This is a short time to get ready for the day. During this time the daily experiences are introduced, and students greet each other and plan for the day.

Outdoor Gross Motor: Students go outside daily, weather permitting. Small and large group experiences are planned.

Breakfast/Snack: Meals are served family-style at tables. Mealtime allows the class to make connections and have conversations. In Infant/Toddler classrooms infant students are fed on demand.

Work Time: Students choose experiences from a variety of areas. Teachers facilitate learning through play in an intentionally planned environment.

Small Group Time: Small group lasts about 10-15 minutes. Teachers plan experiences to complete at the tables; The experiences have a specific area of focus such as literacy, math, science, etc.

Read Aloud: Reading aloud helps develop essential competencies that infants, toddlers, and preschoolers will need to become skilled readers later, including vocabulary knowledge and world knowledge. Besides helping children focus on what they want to say, reading aloud expands comprehension skills and provides a framework for children's oral responses when listening to books or having group discussions.

Lunch: Food is passed, family style, students serve themselves and are encouraged to try new foods.

2025-2026 Family Handbook

Tooth brushing: All students brush their teeth after a meal. Adults teach healthy dental habits.

Rest Time: Classes have a 45-minute rest time. Infant/Toddler students rest as needed, on demand. Students are encouraged to rest but do not have to sleep.

Classroom Home Visits and Conferences

School-based families participate in at least two home visits and two conferences with their child's teacher. You are welcome to request additional home visits or conferences at any time. The purpose of the home visits and conferences is to share information about your child's progress, share information on topics of interest to families, set goals for your child with you, and answer your questions.

During home visits and conferences, your child's teacher reviews the child assessment portfolio with you. Together, you set goals and plan activities for home and school to help your child learn. The first home visit occurs before classes start, or when your child begins attending the program. Open House is how we introduce you and your child to the classroom. This time is scheduled so each child and family can meet the school staff, see the classroom, and feel comfortable on the first day.

Celebrations

Flowers Early Learning embraces all cultures and beliefs, holding none more important than any other. We recognize that holidays are a huge part of family culture, and we want to provide families with an appropriate way to share their traditions while teaching our students to embrace others. In our classrooms, every experience should be intentionally planned with learning objectives; holidays and celebrations are not exempt from this rule.

Flowers Early Learning takes a "learning vs. celebrating" approach to these holidays. Teachers will invite families to share a special tradition, food, song, or ritual. These experiences will teach students about the similarities and differences among families and the unique ways they celebrate the holiday. The goal is for students to understand that all families are different and celebrate in ways that work for them.

Curriculum

Flowers Early Learning uses the High Scope Curriculum. High Scope is an active learning curriculum which means your student will learn through open-ended materials and experiences to guide children's learning. Our home-based option utilizes Growing Great Kids (GGK), which is strength-based and parent-focused.

Our teachers use their curriculums to guide their lesson plans and make adaptations as needed based on students' needs and interests.

We believe you are your child's first and most important teacher! We value your ideas and encourage you to share your observations with your teacher.

2025-2026 Family Handbook

CLASS Observation Tool

Our school-based classrooms are observed using the CLASS (classroom assessment scoring system). The CLASS™ tool focuses on the quality of the interactions between teachers and students as well as the extension of learning.

GGK Observation Tools

Home-based programming is observed using the GGK Fidelity Tool tools two times a year. The GGK tool focuses on family engagement/support, parent-child interactions, and Home Visitor facilitation of visits.

Dress Code

Clothing for students should be appropriate for school. The clothing should be easy to manipulate for the child, simple, comfortable, weather friendly, and should not create a tripping hazard.

Closed-toe shoes (such as tennis shoes) are encouraged for safety. No sandals or flip-flops.

Weather-appropriate clothing must always be worn as students go outside to play most days. Reminder: Boots for rain or snow; coats or light jackets depending on the season, snow pants for cold winter days and wet playgrounds, hats, and gloves. Make sure your child is dressed appropriately when they leave the house, some classrooms start their day on the playground. If you are unable to provide weather-appropriate clothing, please reach out to your Family Advocate or Home Visitor.

For Adults: When volunteering in the classroom, we ask you please follow the same dress code guidelines as we ask our staff. Open-toe shoes are not permitted. Please wear shoes or boots appropriate for the weather. Tight-fitting, revealing, and low-rise pant styles are not appropriate for interacting with students in the classroom.

Home-Based Home Visits

Families and their highly trained Home Visitor will set personalized goals for their young students (ages 0-3 years old) to support specific skill building and prepare them for Preschool. Home Visits are held once a week in the family's home for 90 minutes. Together, the family and their home visitor plan activities and experiences to build those specific skills during each visit using common household items.

Families also get to attend SCHOOL! two times a month. Going to a classroom two times a month allows the family and their student to practice being in school, have a snack, practice taking turns with materials, and even make friends. These experiences connect to the skill-building that happens on each home visit. As a parent, you have opportunities to build relationships with other families during SCHOOL! Sessions.

Through the partnership with families and their home visitors, community resources are shared to support families in meeting their needs.

2025-2026 Family Handbook

Home-Based Expectant Mothers Program

Becoming pregnant and having a baby is one of the most joyful experiences families can have. Pregnancy often brings excitement as well as an anxiousness at the unknown. Attachment to an unborn baby begins during pregnancy. This program is centered around the entire family. The stronger the attachment to the unborn baby prenatally, the more secure the baby will be after birth.

The first three months of pregnancy are a critical time for a baby's development. All the brain cells the baby will ever have are formed during these first three months. Trimesters 2 and 3 are also of great significance for the developing baby, as well as preparing for the changes in the growth of the family.

A specially trained home visitor plans home visits with families. All Home Visitors are infant-massaged trained as well as trained in prenatal development and early prenatal reading. Home Visitors also share prenatal information- including fetal development, labor, delivery, and recovery as well as supportive postpartum care with families.

Expectant Mothers are also invited to attend SCHOOL! offered twice per month to connect with other families enrolled in the program. At SCHOOL! Families can expect to see other expectant families and their young students interacting in a classroom environment as they prepare to enroll their students in a classroom setting.

Expectant Families receive 1 book per month to start building their baby's library at home before they are born.

"Skill Builder" for Home-Based

Every week parents and home visitors plan activities/experiences to build their child's skills in between home visits. As you and your child work together to build the skill you had discussed with your home visitor, parents record their observations on the Skill Builder form. The home visitor and parent will talk about how the skill building went at the next visit and discuss how your child is developing as we will track your child's development together.

Building skills every week helps you and your child prepare for preschool and strengthens your child's school readiness skills.

We hope you enjoy the time you spend with your child completing the activities, reading, and building skills for their next step!

"Skill Builders" for classroom students

Skill Builders are a big part of what you and your child will work on together this year!

Skill Builder is a collection of activities that are created individually for each child, each week. Sometimes your teacher will send home materials, other times it will be activities you will be able to complete with items from your home.

2025-2026 Family Handbook

Skill Builders are important for two BIG reasons...

- 1.) They extend the classroom experience into your home.
- 2.) The time you spend completing Skill Builder kits is donated to our program, which is critical for Flowers Early Learning to meet our in-kind requirements.

While doing the Skill Builder activities, watch and observe what your child is doing and write your comments on the form. When the activities are complete, send the form back to your teacher and they will use your observations to assess your child's development.

Doing Skill Builders together helps you and your child prepare for Preschool and/or kindergarten. It increases your child's outcomes and school readiness.

We want you and your child to enjoy the time you spend completing the activities and reading! Talk to your teacher about the kind of Skill Builders you would enjoy!

Family Services – Attendance, Enrollment, Family Advocates, Resources

Attendance

If your child will be absent, please contact the classroom or the family advocate before the beginning of the school day. When a student is absent from their class without explanation from the family, within one hour, Flowers Early Learning staff will contact the family to confirm the safety of the student and offer support if necessary. It is an expectation that students will maintain an 85% average daily attendance rate over a month-long period.

Attending school regularly helps children feel better about school—and themselves. Start building this habit in preschool to develop the importance of getting to school on time, every day.

Regular attendance is essential for students to receive the benefits of the Early Childhood Education Programs. Young students with poor attendance in preschool also lose out on valuable learning time and if chronic absence continues into kindergarten, it can pull down academic achievement.

- If your child misses school and our classroom staff have not heard from you, they will make every attempt to reach you within the first 60 minutes of class on the phone or make a home visit to learn the reason for the absence and ensure your family's safety.
- When multiple days are missed, staff will contact you directly or make a home visit to discuss ways to improve attendance at preschool for your child.
- Teachers will also discuss attendance concerns and set goals with families at conferences.
- Family Advocates can provide strategies, resources, and referrals to community partners that may help families overcome barriers to regular attendance at preschool.
- If every effort has been made to improve attendance, yet chronic absenteeism persists, a student's spot may be considered an enrollment vacancy and your child's spot may be forfeited.

2025-2026 Family Handbook

Late Pick-Up

If a student is picked up late from the classroom and/or bus, staff will start calling the family and individuals listed on the Child Information Card.

If a student is left at school or on the bus and no one on the Child Information Card has responded within 30 minutes, the teacher/bus staff will call the local police. Once the local police arrive at the school, the student will be released to the police with a copy of the Child Information Card.

First Notice

If a parent/guardian is more than 5 minutes late, the teacher/bus staff will start the late pick-up notice form and explain the late pick-up procedure.

Second Notice

If a parent/guardian is more than 5 minutes late, the teacher/bus staff will review the late pick-up notice form and explain the process that follows. The teacher/bus staff will have a conversation with the family about the importance of picking up on time and set an informal action step/goal to ensure it will not happen again.

Third Notice

If a parent/guardian is more than 5 minutes late, the teacher/bus driver will review the late pick-up notice form and explain the process that follows. The teacher/bus staff will contact the Family Advocate, who will then contact the family to set more formal goals to ensure they can pick up their child on time. Please see fee schedule for fees related to private pay late pick-up notices.

Final Notice

If a parent/guardian is more than 5 minutes late the teacher/bus driver will review the late pick-up notice form and explain the process that follows. The teacher/bus driver will let the family know that the child cannot return to school and/or bus (depending on the method of pick-up) until the family is contacted by the Family Services Director or the Transportation Manager.

For Private Pay students

After the third notice, families will be charged a fee of \$10.00 for the first five to ten minutes late and then an additional \$5.00 for every minute after the first 10 minutes. If late pickups continue after a third warning and interventions with the support of Flowers Early Learning fail, the child's enrollment may be forfeited.

Criteria for Enrollment

Flowers Early Learning serves children ages birth-5 years and expectant families within Berrien, Cass, and Van Buren Counties. There are no organization affiliation requirements. We prioritize serving families who are at or below 100% poverty, McKinney Vento eligible, foster children, families receiving Public Assistance or children with Individual Family/Education Service Plan (IFSP/IEP). Additionally, Flowers Early Learning has a limited number of Private Pay slots which are not contingent on any specific enrollment criteria.

These are items needed before a child can attend; documentation of eligibility, proof of birth, Official immunization records, Well Child Exam documentation, signed application, child health history, Child Information Card and custody documentation. For Private Pay students only, a signed payment commitment forms as well as payment for the first month are required before the student's first day in attendance.

2025-2026 Family Handbook

Withdrawal from program

Parents/guardians can withdraw their students at any time.

Flowers Early Learning does not withdraw or expel students per the Head Start Performance Standards for behavioral concerns including persistent aggressive behaviors. Every student is provided with the appropriate support and services to address necessary concerns. A student's behavioral difficulties are unlikely to be resolved without intervention and dismissing students from early childhood programs decreases access to such services.

Determining appropriate intervention requires formal evaluation, including classroom observations by mental health professionals. Evaluation results address preventative strategies and outline the teacher support and guidance needed to enable the student to learn and display more appropriate classroom behavior. This may require ongoing consultation with mental health and/or special education service providers, both internal and external. For some students, implementing such approaches may require extra support to work more closely with the student.

In rare circumstances, when, despite the provision of a well-managed classroom, supplemented by well-implemented behavioral and mental health interventions, a student's aggressive behavior presents a significant threat to their safety and the safety of others, the program may consider an alternative means of serving the student and family. This might include temporarily providing child development services through home visiting as the program works with mental health service providers to identify more intensive services and behavioral supports to enable the student to re-enter and participate successfully in the classroom. Efforts to acquire the services needed are carefully documented and done in partnership with the family. In exceptional cases, when recommended by an outside mental health professional serving the student, transitioning to a more intensive program may be necessary. The program works closely with the family to support this transition. (R400.8140(4), NAEYC 1E.1)

Similarly, unresolved absenteeism, continued late pickups, and/or non-payment (for private pay families) may impact enrollment status.

Tuition Information (Private pay only)

Rates are based on an annual fee and are paid in monthly installments. Families will receive a billing statement via email. Tuition is due on the 20th of each month for the following month of service. Each tuition payment secures your child's enrollment in the program.

Days missed for any reason – including illness, vacation, emergency closures, or other absences will not be credited or refunded. A \$50 late fee will be assessed on any payment not received by the 1st of the service month. If tuition remains unpaid (including any applicable late fees), your child may not attend the program, and the space may be offered to another family. Once the balance is paid in full, re-enrollment is contingent upon space availability.

2025-2026 Family Handbook

Subsidies and tuition assistance

Flowers early learning accepts tuition assistance through the Michigan Department of Health and Human Services (MDHHS) Child Development and Care (CDC) program. Flowers Early Learning staff are available to assist families with navigating the process and understanding their co-payments. Families are responsible for any tuition balance not covered by assistance programs.

Fees

- **Tuition for private pay families**
Infant/Toddler (birth to 3yrs) - \$28,000 per student annually, billed monthly at a rate of \$2,333
Preschool (3yrs to 4yrs) - \$19,000 per student per school year, billed monthly at a rate of \$2,111
- **Registration Fee**
A non-refundable application fee of \$55 is required once enrollment is confirmed annually. If a family chooses to withdraw prior to the child's start date, the fee remains non-refundable.
- **Payment Processing**
Payments are accepted online via TADS parent portal via credit or debit card, or ach transaction. A 3.5% processing fee applies to tuition payments made with a credit or debit card. Ach minimum is \$3 max of \$5
- **Returned Payment Fee**
A \$50 fee will be charged for failed electronic payments.
- **Collections**
In the event an unpaid balance is referred to a collection agency or legal counsel, the family is responsible for all related fees incurred by Flowers Early Learning.

Late Fees

- **Late Tuition**
Tuition is due by the 20th day of the month prior to service. A \$50 late fee will be charged if payment is not received within 6 banking days.
- **Late Pick-Up**
After the third notice, families will be charged a fee of \$10 for the first 5 to 10 minutes late and an additional \$5 for every minute after the first 10 minutes, charged to the next month's invoice.

For more details on the fee policy, please refer to the "Consideration for Private Pay" handout included in your application packet.

Custody Matters

Our goal is always to advocate for children. In cases involving child custody, we need a copy of the current custody court order, signed by a judge. We will support any decisions that have been determined by the court.

To ensure that all parental rights are respected, the following has been established for dealing with custodial arrangements.

- The person(s) with physical custodial rights of the Flowers Early Learning enrolled student is responsible for listing all people on the Child Information Card to whom their child may be released and for notifying staff of any changes.
- The most current court order regarding the release of children to a particular parent/legal guardian shall be kept on file at the student's school location.

2025-2026 Family Handbook

- If the two parties (joint custody) cannot agree, a meeting may need to be held with both parties, the Center Director and Family Services Director to establish the Child Information Card.

To learn more about custody and custody resources, please see the Family Resource Book.

Family Engagement

Families are the cornerstone of Flowers Early Learning. We believe that parents are the primary teachers of their children. Families have much to contribute to Flowers Early Learning including their cultural heritage, family values, and experiences. Flowers Early Learning serves individuals and families from communities across southwest Michigan and does everything possible to assure all families feel comfortable and included. We encourage families to be involved in all aspects of the program and their child's education. The more involved families are, the more their children will achieve. Staff partners with families to ensure their children get the best education experience possible!

Family members have many opportunities to participate in the program. They can:

- Read Aloud in the classroom.
- Volunteer in the classroom (See Volunteer Policy).
- Attend Family Nights, Fantastic Families events, and Family Training events.
- Share ideas about learning that can be used in the classroom and on home visits.
- Participate in Flowers Early Learning Sub Committees such as Enrollment, Recruitment, Selection, Enrollment, Attendance (ERSEA), Community Assessment, Self-Assessment, and more. For more information on these committees, please reach out to your Family Advocate or Home Visitor.
- Attend Family Committee Meetings. This is the place to connect with other families in the program.
- Participate in Policy Council. They work with staff to make critical decisions about the program.

Family Advocates

Flowers Early Learning has Family Advocates who are ambassadors of our program and champions of our students and families. Their role includes, but is not limited to:

- Recruiting families and community partnerships
- Completing applications, registrations, and re-enrollments
- Working with the family to identify areas of growth through our family strengths assessment and Family Partnership Agreements, a strength-based, goal-setting process. Family Advocates provide resources and encouragement to families to help optimize goal achievement.
- Referring families to community resources and following up on families' satisfaction with resources to which they have been referred
- Assisting families in meeting all program health requirements
- Promoting regular attendance in school-based and home-based programs
- Supporting Policy Council members with meeting attendance and Parent Committee Meetings
- Transporting enrolled children and their families to necessary medical and dental appointments
- Being active members of community-based organization boards and meetings

Family Nights

Family Night is all about getting Ready for School – for families and students alike! It is just one of our training opportunities for families. Family Night provides families the opportunities to assist in the development of

2025-2026 Family Handbook

activities that address their interests and needs and that support the education and healthy development of their children.

- For families of all students participating in School-Based and Home-Based options.
- Includes essential information, training, resources, activities, and a meal.
- Addresses issues specific to each community.
- Provides resources to assist families in working with community organizations.

Family Strengths Assessment & Family Partnership Agreements

An important piece of Flowers Early Learning programming is to help families reach goals towards personal, family, and professional success. Flowers Early Learning Family Advocates and Home Visitors use the Family Strengths Assessment, an interview and assessment tool, to identify each family's strengths, determine areas for support, and assist families in writing achievable goals for themselves. Flowers Early Learning staff connect families with resources and encourage them on their path to goal achievement. Families can be linked to other agencies and organizations offering programs including but not limited to:

- Housing
- Employment
- Food
- Clothing
- Child Care
- Counseling
- Domestic Violence Assistance
- Education (GED, Diploma, College, Skilled Trades, etc.)
- Family Literacy
- Financial Education (Budgeting, Savings, Banking, Tax Credits, Tax Filing, etc.)
- Health Needs (Finding a doctor, getting insurance, etc.)
- Utility Payment Assistance

Language Services Department

The Language Services Department assists the families in our communities by providing interpretation and translation services on behalf of the agency. The Language Services Staff becomes a communication bridge between families and staff that may otherwise experience a language barrier. The role of a Language Services staff member includes but is not limited to:

- Completing applications, registrations, and re-enrollments
- Connecting Multilingual families with resources in their communities
- Assisting families in meeting the program health requirements
- Providing interpretation and translation services during all events held by Flowers Early Learning; including home visits, parent-teacher conferences, and any form of communication needed
- Providing classroom observations for multilingual students to assess their home language development every week
- Partnering with other Community Agencies to ensure that multilingual approaches are being implemented

2025-2026 Family Handbook

Fantastic Families Events

Flowers Early Learning recognizes the vital role that all family members play in a child's life. We believe that meaningful engagement from a variety of caregivers significantly supports a child's development. To celebrate the unique contributions of different family members and to align with our performance standards, we are proud to offer the Fantastic Families event series. One key focus outlined in our Performance Standards is the engagement of fathers and male role models at every level of our agency. All family members, including fathers, are encouraged to participate in program governance, parent committee meetings, special events, skill builder kit activities, classroom volunteerism, employment, and other areas.

While all Fantastic Families events are open to every family member, certain events will spotlight specific roles to honor and celebrate their unique contribution to a child's growth and success.

Resource Book

Each family participating in the program receives a copy of our Resource Book. The Resource Book contains valuable information on community organizations and services available to families. A few examples are WIC and Michigan State University Extension (nutritional services), Mental Health Services, Domestic Violence resources, services for children with disabilities, and many more. If you need assistance and cannot locate it in the Resource Book, please call our office at 269-657-2581.

For additional community resources sign up for Bright by Text for notifications of local resources and events, text SWMICHIGAN to 274448.

Weather and Closures

We keep families informed through the One Call Now system. We use One Call to deliver closure messages to families by telephone, cell phone, e-mail, or in any combination. One Call is used to notify families of any school closings or delays and to send reminders regarding events and other important program information.

This messaging system is kept up to date with our database. Make sure to keep your Family Advocate and/or Teachers informed of any changes in contact information so that you will not miss an alert or notification.

When local schools are closed due to weather, our Flowers Early Learning school location(s) are closed and home visits are canceled in those areas. Decisions to close for weather, other than when the public schools are closed, may occur based on current weather conditions and any other factors that may affect the safety of students and staff.

In the event that 60% or more of our sites are closed due to inclement weather, our entire agency will close. This decision reflects the broad scope of our services, and the high level of interdependence among our sites, as many functions rely on coordination and support across multiple locations.

In the event of an early dismissal based upon weather, illnesses, building issues, power outages, etc. families are notified using the information from the Child Information Card. Every attempt will be made to notify the parent or guardian listed on the card. If a parent or guardian cannot be notified of the early dismissal, the emergency contact numbers will be called.

We also contact local TV regarding delays and closures.

2025-2026 Family Handbook

Health and Mental Health Services

Accidents/Injury

While we make all attempts to ensure the safety of your child while in our care, occasionally accidents happen. Flowers Early Learning has staff trained in First Aid and CPR at all school locations by the State of Michigan Licensing Regulations. For a non-emergency illness/injury, parents/guardians will be notified by phone, in writing or in person on the day it occurs. Should your child require immediate medical attention, we will call 911 and then notify you.

Discipline Policy

All Staff and Volunteers must adhere to the following Childcare Licensing rule for discipline, R 400.8140 Discipline Rule 140.

- 1) Positive methods of discipline that encourage self-control, self-direction, self-esteem, and cooperation must be used.
- 2) All the following means of punishment are prohibited:
 - a. Hitting, spanking, shaking, biting, pinching, or inflicting other forms of corporal punishment.
 - b. Placing any substances in a child's mouth, including but not limited to, soap, hot sauce, or vinegar.
 - c. Restricting a child's movement by binding or tying him or her.
 - d. Inflicting mental or emotional punishment, such as humiliating, shaming, or threatening a child.
 - e. Depriving a child of meals, snacks, rest, or necessary toilet use.
 - f. Excluding a child from outdoor play or other gross motor activities.
 - g. Excluding a child from daily learning experiences.
 - h. Confining a child in an enclosed area, such as a closet, locked room, box, or similar enclosure.
 - i. Time out must not be used for children under 3 years of age.
- 3) Non-severe and developmentally appropriate discipline or restraint may be used when reasonably necessary, based on a child's development, to prevent a child from harming himself or herself or to prevent a child from harming other persons or property, excluding those forms of punishment prohibited by subrule (2) of this rule.
- 4) A written policy is developed and implemented regarding the age-appropriate, non-severe discipline of children. The policy is provided to staff and parents/guardians.

All Flowers Early Learning staff adhere to the Michigan Child Care Licensing Rule 400.8140, 140 and meet the expectations by the implementation of Conscious Discipline trauma-informed, evidence-based social-emotional learning for all ages.

If a student is harming themselves or others a safety hold may be used only as a last resort. Documented Conscious Discipline strategies are used first to assist students and staff. The parent/guardian is notified if a safety hold has been used in the classroom. Safety holds are never used as a form of discipline or control.

Any employee who observes staff, volunteers, or visitors using inappropriate disciplinary practices must report the incident to their supervisor immediately.

2025-2026 Family Handbook

Emergency Procedures

Immediate and appropriate First Aid is given by certified staff at the school or on the bus. For students who require immediate* medical intervention staff will call 911 then notify families, and the Health Services Director or designee at the Flowers Early Learning Office. If no answer, the Preschool Program Director will provide directions until the Health Services Director or designee can be contacted.¹

Staff will follow all Flowers Early Learning procedures during emergencies. Including notification of Health Services staff, and parent/guardian. If the student needs to go home in an emergency and the families cannot provide transportation, two staff members will transport the student. Students will never be left alone or in the care of someone not listed on the Child Information Card.

If a sick or injured student is taken home, and further care is needed, staff will assist the family in calling a family physician or dentist. If the family does not have a family physician or dentist, or cannot afford private care, they will be instructed how to proceed to obtain the services of a physician, hospital, or dentist.

Staff involved in an emergency will complete the appropriate report and forward it to the Health Services Director.

Staff will follow up with families within 24 hours of an initial injury. (i.e., a phone call or home visit).

Facility Cleaning and Sanitizing Procedures

Flowers Early Learning ensures all schools are clean and sanitary. Staff wear nonporous gloves and clean surfaces initially with paper towels and wash the area thoroughly with soap and water. Surfaces are disinfected using a solution of bleach and water mixed according to sanitation procedure.

Health Exams

Students enrolled in Flowers Early Learning are required to have a current yearly Well Child Exam to attend; and an initial Dental Exam within 90 days, then every 6 months.

Your child must meet the minimum immunization requirement to attend a Flowers Early Learning classroom. The minimum immunization requirements in the State of Michigan are:

- 1-DTaP
- 1-POLIO
- 1-HepB
- 1-MMR at/after 12 months of age
- Varicella at/after 12 months of age or proof of disease
- Completed series of HIB or one at/after 15 months of age.
- Pneumococcal Conjugate Vaccine - 1 dose at or after 24 months of age or an age-appropriate completed series

¹*Immediate Medical Intervention: Loss of consciousness, breathing difficulties, severe bleeding, seizure, neck or back injury, a possible broken bone, or shock.

*Dental Emergency Care: Tooth knocked out baby/ permanent or chipped tooth does not require 911 unless the student became unconscious. Staff will follow the Dental Care Emergency Poster instructions and contact the parent/guardian. We recommend that the student be seen by their dentist in this situation.

2025-2026 Family Handbook

Parents must get an official immunization record from their health care provider or the local health department. Immunization records must be on file at the administrative office for your child to attend school.

Health Updates

As part of your child's enrollment at Flowers Early Learning, we ask you to share any new or ongoing health or mental health concerns that may arise during the year. Please report any diagnosed or suspected communicable disease(s) your child may have. Our staff will keep you informed of health issues at school locations that may arise during the year that may be of importance to you, your child, and your family.

Flowers Early Learning continues to follow the recommendations from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, Michigan Child Care Licensing, and our local health departments. If your child has been exposed to a communicable/transmissible disease or test positive (i.e., flu, COVID-19 and RSV), please let your teacher know immediately. We may need to take further steps in our classrooms.

Hygiene

Hand Washing

Hand washing is the most effective way to prevent the spread of germs and illnesses. Students are taught to perform hand washing daily with meals, after toileting, and touching soiled surfaces. Staff and volunteers also wash their hands before meals, after toileting, and after touching soiled surfaces/items.

Tooth Brushing

An essential part of being healthy is having healthy teeth. Poor dental health may cause trouble with eating and/or drinking and may lead to other health/behavioral issues.

During flu season or increased numbers of illnesses due to other circumstances, we may discontinue toothbrushing until we are sure it is safe to resume.

Students need to learn the importance of brushing their teeth. A toothbrush will be sent home for every student, and we ask you to help your children brush their teeth at least one time a day.

Families can learn to "Lift the Lip" check monthly on children's gums and teeth to watch for early signs of decay (chalky white spots, brown spots, or other discoloration).

Illness

The health and safety of all children is a top priority. There are situations in which students should be kept at home so they can rest and feel better. These include:

- If your child has a temperature of 100.4 or higher (Children should remain at home until they do not have a fever for 24 hours not using fever-reducing medication)
- If your child is coughing and cannot stop, breathing hard or fast, and/or has a fever.
- If your child has many watery stools (diarrhea "the runs")
- If your child is vomiting (not explained by other medical conditions i.e., asthma)
- If your child has a rash that is spreading or is accompanied by a fever or scratching.

2025-2026 Family Handbook

If your child becomes ill at school with a rash, fever, vomiting, or diarrhea, we will make every attempt to contact you so you can take your child home to provide comfort and rest. If your child becomes ill at school, have a plan in place if you are not available to pickup your child.

If you have any questions about sending your child to school do not hesitate to call and speak with your child's teacher or a member of our Health Services Team.

Bed Bugs

Occasionally a bed bug may be discovered in one of our classrooms. If a bed bug is found in the classroom the teacher follows the Bed Bug Procedure. Families will receive a letter to inform them of the discovery and the steps that Flowers Early Learning will do to prevent passing the bed bugs.

Bed Bugs can be very difficult to get rid of. If you need information about bed bugs you may call Flowers Early Learning Health Services or speak to your Family Advocate.

Communicable Disease Procedure

According to the State of Michigan Public Health Code (Public Act 368, of 1978 as amended), the local health department shall be notified of the occurrence of any reportable communicable disease.

Flowers Early Learning follows those guidelines established by the Van Buren/Cass County District Health Department and Berrien County Health Departments for Communicable Childhood Illness for the exclusion of children, employees, and volunteers.

The Health Department provides Flowers Early Learning with an updated list yearly that we will post to our website FlowersEarlyLearning.org.

If your child is diagnosed with a communicable disease, Flowers Early Learning will follow all local and state reporting procedures, in addition to Childcare licensing procedures. This may include notifying the local Health Department and the designated Childcare Licensing consultant.

Head Lice

Flowers Early Learning follows the recommendations of the Michigan Department of Community Health and the Michigan Department of Education which focuses on the exclusion of active head lice infestations only. Active infestations can be defined as the presence of live lice or nits found within ¼" of the scalp. Nits that are found beyond ¼" of the scalp have more than likely hatched or are no longer viable.

When live lice are discovered on a student, staff will contact a parent/guardian. The child may stay at school until the end of the day. Staff will provide the parent/guardian with treatment information. Immediate treatment at home is advised. The student will be re-admitted to school after treatment and examination by staff. If, upon examination, there are NO live lice or nits closer than ¼ inch from the scalp, the student may re-enter the classroom.

Returning to School

If your child is injured at home and you have taken them to the doctor, or the emergency room or they needed some type of surgery, a note is required from the doctor allowing your child to come back to school.

2025-2026 Family Handbook

Please contact the teacher first, before the student can return to school, to notify them that the child does not have restrictions (special things that must be done to care for an illness or injury). If the doctor has noted restrictions on the return to school note, the teacher will contact Health Services Staff to make sure it is safe for your student to return.

Lead Poisoning

Flowers Early Learning works with each family to assure that their child is safe from lead poisoning. Each family will complete a lead questionnaire at registration, and we ask for parent/guardian consent to perform a lead test on their child if they have not been previously tested for lead. Lead testing requires a finger poke to analyze the blood.

All children should be blood tested for lead at 12 months of age and 24 months of age. Additionally, if a child was not tested for lead between 36 months and 72 months of age, a blood lead test should be performed.

If your child has a lead value of 3.5 or higher, the Health Services Specialist will send a letter for you to take to the doctor. Your doctor will do a more thorough blood test to determine if further treatment is needed. If your child's lead level results are still high, the State of Michigan is notified, and your local health department will reach out.

Many families living in an identified area have a high risk for lead exposure: precautions can be taken to keep children safe from lead poisoning.

Medication Procedure

If your child requires medication to be administered at school, please notify your Family Advocate, Home Visitor, or Teacher. They will contact the Health Services Department and the Health Services team will work with you and your child's doctor to set up a schedule for medication administration. Before medications are administered at school, written instructions from your child's doctor are required. Once written instructions are received, classroom staff and/or Health Services staff will meet with you to review medication administration and potential emergency plans. Accommodations will be made based on an individual basis.

Non-emergency medication is stored in a lock box out of reach of children. Emergency medication is stored in the classroom out of reach of children. Emergency medication follows the students throughout the day as they transition to different areas of the school campus, including the playground and the bus. (NAEYC 5A.21)

Mental Health

Flowers Early Learning Mental Health Consultants promote positive mental health, emotional well-being, and resiliency; and as a program, we strive to create conditions where young children and their families have the necessary support system for school readiness success.

Mental Health Consultants post their schedule in each classroom and are available to meet with families upon request. If you have questions, please contact your child's teacher.

Nutrition

The purpose of our nutrition plan is to make mealtime a learning experience for students. We practice family-style meals to mirror the home atmosphere. Students gain health benefits by eating healthy meals in the

2025-2026 Family Handbook

correct portions, as well as building a variety of language and motor skills.

Flowers Early Learning provides meals for students based on the USDA Child & Adult Care Food Program (CACFP) guidelines for breakfast, lunch, and/or snacks. Food is never used as a reward or a punishment. Meals are served family style. Staff and volunteers present in the classroom during mealtimes eat with the students. Students will be introduced to a variety of new foods.

In addition to meals provided at our kitchen, Flowers Early Learning partners with several public schools to provide food. The public schools may use other free food programs such as National School Lunch, or the School Breakfast Program. The same quality and Flowers Early Learning guidelines are followed when using other food service programs.

Families will receive copies of the menu at Open House, and it will be posted in each classroom. Students with special dietary needs will receive meals/snacks in accordance with the child's needs. Food substitutions will only be provided for doctor-diagnosed food allergies/intolerances, in accordance with CACFP guidelines. Flowers Early Learning is responsible for providing food substitutions.

Families of Flowers Early Learning students can advise staff of concerns regarding their child's nutrition through the Child History Form completed at the time of application. During the school year, a Nutrition Questionnaire is provided to families, to address any nutrition issues. In addition, families are encouraged to discuss individual concerns with their child's teacher. The teacher can follow up by notifying the Nutrition Manager, who will then contact the family. Nutrition concerns can be communicated one-on-one between the family and the Nutrition Manager at individual nutrition counseling sessions. If families wish to speak with the Nutrition Manager directly, they may get the contact information from school staff.

In accordance with the Michigan food code, and per Health Department regulations, no left-over food or drinks served at Flowers Early Learning Schools at meals, during Family Nights, etc., may be taken home by families, volunteers, or staff.

Food Safety

Due to health concerns including food allergies/sensitivities, we **cannot** allow foods in the classroom that have been prepared outside of our Flowers Early Learning facilities. Flowers Early Learning understands families may wish to bring a special treat to celebrate their child's birthday. Please review the list of allowed items and discuss with your teaching staff what you have selected so they can monitor the treats for food allergies.

Healthy foods to share with friends: granola bars without nuts, fruit bars, fruit cups, prepared Jell-O and pudding cups (only those that do not need refrigeration and do not contain red dye) animal crackers, vanilla wafers, cheese crackers, 100-calorie snack packages. Recommended foods to keep home: cake/cupcakes, ice cream, cookies, donuts, and snack chips. Foods that are NOT ALLOWED at Flowers Early Learning due to Choking Hazards: all candy, popcorn, peanuts, and other nuts, raisins, or dried fruit, unless cooked in food, or any nut butters.

2025-2026 Family Handbook

Non-Discrimination Statement

In accordance with Federal civil rights law and U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) civil rights regulations and policies, the USDA, its Agencies, offices, and employees, and institutions participating in or administering USDA programs are prohibited from discriminating based on race, color, national origin, religion, sex, disability, age, marital status, family/parental status, income derived from a public assistance program, political beliefs, or reprisal or retaliation for prior civil rights activity, in any program or activity conducted or funded by USDA (not all bases apply to all programs). Remedies and complaint filing deadlines vary by program or incident.

Persons with disabilities who require alternative means of communication for program information (e.g., Braille, large print, audiotope, American Sign Language, etc.) should contact the State or local Agency that administers the program or contact USDA through the Telecommunications Relay Service at 711 (voice and TTY). Additionally, program information may be made available in languages other than English.

To file a program discrimination complaint, complete the USDA Program Discrimination Complaint Form, AD-3027, found online at [How to File a Program Discrimination Complaint](#) and at any USDA office or write a letter addressed to USDA and provide in the letter all of the information requested in the form. To request a copy of the complaint form, call (866) 632-9992. Submit your completed form or letter to USDA by: (1) mail: U.S. Department of Agriculture, Office of the Assistant Secretary for Civil Rights, 1400 Independence Avenue, SW, Mail Stop 9410, Washington, D.C. 20250-9410; (2) fax: (202) 690-7442; or (3) email: program.intake@usda.gov. USDA is an equal opportunity provider, employer, and lender.

Outdoor Activity Restrictions

Students at Flowers Early Learning play outside every day, weather permitting. All school staff are required to be on the playground to assure the safety of students. Students at single classroom sites who have medically documented outdoor restrictions; may need to stay home or adjust attendance times to exclude outdoor playtime. At multiple classroom sites, students with medically documented outdoor restrictions may be allowed to stay inside based on medical need, if staffing allows. Health Services staff will work with you and your child's health provider to meet your child's needs.

Special Needs

Children develop quickly during their early years; at times they may need extra support to meet milestones. Every student is initially screened to identify any delays and develop individualized plans to assure the best learning opportunity.

If you have concerns about your child's development, speak with his or her teacher. A Flowers Early Learning Disability Consultant will contact you to discuss your concerns and ask for permission to observe your child. The Disability Consultant supports families in getting needed services for children who may need additional support.

Disability Consultants work with classroom teachers in lesson planning for students who already have an Individual Education Plan or Individual Family Support Plan. This may include activities in your weekly Skill Builder Kit that provide continued support for your child.

Students who do not qualify for services outside of Flowers Early Learning will be provided additional strategies to assist their school readiness success.

2025-2026 Family Handbook

Young Athletes Program

Special Olympics Young Athletes is an early childhood play program for children with and without intellectual disabilities, ages 3 to 5. Young Athletes introduce basic sports skills, like running, kicking, and throwing. Young Athletes provides children of all abilities the same opportunities to advance in core developmental milestones. Children learn how to play with others and develop important skills for learning. Children also learn to share, take turns, and follow directions. These skills help children in family, community, and school activities. It is one of the three components of a Unified Champion School partnership with Special Olympics of Michigan.

Transportation Services

Your child's safety is our main concern. Students must be accompanied by a responsible adult to and from the bus stop, or to and from school. Students are only released to a parent or legal guardian or another individual identified on the Child Information Card by the parent or legal guardian. If a person who is listed on the Child Information Card is not familiar to staff, identification will be required. Be sure to carry identification daily to the bus stop in the event there is a substitute driver or monitor.

General Transportation Information

- If your child is not coming to school, call your school and let us know or send a note the next day with your driver to let us know why your child was absent.
- If you must cross the street to put your child on or off the bus, the driver will signal you when it is safe to cross with the crossing paddle.
- There are DANGER ZONES around the bus that you and your child need to be aware of:
 - Directly in front of the bus
 - Directly behind the bus
 - Ten feet out on both sides of the bus
 - Directly in front of and behind the front and rear wheels
 - Stay away from the DANGER ZONES

Bus Routes

Families at schools that provide transportation are assigned a bus stop. They may go to their assigned stop or provide their own transportation. Enrollment changes cause route changes.

- Only students enrolled in the school location may use Flowers Early Learning transportation. Family volunteers may be able to ride the bus, depending on available seats.
- Be at the bus stop 5 minutes before pick-up and drop-off times to ensure you do not miss the bus.
- Hold your child's hand to and from the bus stop.
- Assist your child up and down the bus steps. Remind your child to hold the handrail.
- The bus monitor will buckle your child into the seat.
- If your child misses the bus, you may bring them to another bus stop or school.
- When drivers are unable to work or buses break down, you may be asked to provide your own transportation. We make every effort to keep these times to a minimum.

2025-2026 Family Handbook

Transportation Concerns

Transportation policies were designed to comply with all state, federal, and childcare licensing laws, and regulations and for the safe and efficient transportation of our students. If you have questions, please talk with your Bus Driver, Teacher, or Transportation Manager.

Self-Transportation

- Buckle your child in your car according to Michigan State Law.
- Get your child to school on time and pick up your child on time each day.
- Use extreme caution in the parking lot and always hold your child's hand.

Volunteer Policy

Flowers Early Learning welcomes family and community volunteers. Flowers Early Learning is required to complete a comprehensive background check on all volunteers. Any individual registered on the public sex offender registry (PSOR) is prohibited from having contact with any child in care.

Family Volunteers:

One of Flowers Early Learning's fundamental principles is based on parents being the first and best teachers to their children. Families are considered valued partners in the process of helping children develop to their fullest potential and volunteers are an essential part of that process. Having a special person come to volunteer is very meaningful to each child. Families are asked to participate, when they can, in Flowers Early Learning activities such as:

- Volunteering at their child's school
- Attending Family Committee meetings, Family Nights, and other Flowers Early Learning events
- Participating in Home Visits & Conferences
- Assisting in planning and making activities at home or school
- Completing Skill Builders and weekly individualization calendars
- Reviewing and returning the Family Communication folder weekly
- Participating in socialization activities
- Participating in the Health Services Advisory Committee, the Policy Council, Family Committee, Location Committee, ERSEA Committee, etc.

Community Volunteers:

Volunteers from the community are welcomed at our schools. Volunteers from the community may:

- Volunteer at a school
- Act as a resource person
- Assist in planning and making activities
- Participate on the Health Services Advisory Committee, the Policy Council, the School Readiness Committee
- Participate in our annual Self-Assessment

At Flowers Early Learning schools no volunteer is ever alone with students, although parents may assist their own child with toileting. Volunteers, including parents, are supervised by Flowers Early Learning staff at all times.

2025-2026 Family Handbook

All volunteers are required to read and sign the Volunteer Code of Conduct. All classroom volunteers will require iChat background checks before they can volunteer.

Regular Volunteers: (four hours per week for more than two consecutive weeks)

Michigan Licensing Regulations state: Evidence that all volunteers who have contact with children at least four hours per week for two consecutive weeks are free from communicable tuberculosis, verified within one year before volunteering, and shall be kept on file at the school. Regular volunteers also require a comprehensive background check, to be completed by Human Resources Department.

The Center Director (CD)/Classroom Program Director (CPD) is responsible for assuring the State of Michigan Child Care Licensing Rules for regular volunteers are met. The CD/CPD is responsible for assuring the required documentation is completed, including application and Tb test results. The CD/CPD is also responsible for community volunteer scheduling and assuring ongoing volunteer training occurs. The CD/CPD is responsible for keeping documentation for regular volunteers in the Center Licensing file.

Volunteer Training and Development:

All volunteers receive training and development opportunities. The training for volunteers begins during the first home visit when teachers review the Family Handbook. Training is also provided during the open house. School staff provides training via the Volunteer Training Checklist for families and community volunteers. Ongoing training is provided to volunteers as they work with staff in the classroom.

All Flowers Early Learning families are invited to attend a variety of planned events throughout the year. A variety of activities and training topics are presented. Topics may include mental health, Conscious Discipline, transition, nutrition, etc. Community volunteers are invited to schools throughout the year as resources for families.

Flowers Early Learning parents/guardians are given the opportunity to run for Policy Council and take an active role in program planning and policies. Policy Council members receive training and information which they share with families during Family Committee meetings.

Volunteers who are interested in working for Flowers Early Learning are encouraged to apply for open positions within the organization.

What you can do in the classroom

When you are a volunteer in the classroom you can help with a variety of activities. You may be needed to help with an activity, to supervise an area of the room, or to work with an individual student. You can also help by eating lunch with students, joining in group activities, and participating in outdoor play.

Here are some things you can do in the school:

- READ! READ! READ!
- Attend a field trip
- Write a student's name – have them trace it with a finger/pencil.
- Join students while they play. Look for the signs in each area with suggestions for things to say or ask.
- Help with grounds maintenance.

2025-2026 Family Handbook

All volunteers are required to read and sign the Volunteer Code of Conduct. All classroom volunteers will require iChat background checks before they can volunteer.

In-Kind/Non-Federal Share

Flowers Early Learning is a 501(c)(3) nonprofit organization funded primarily through a federal Office of Head Start grant. Our mission is to be a vibrant and progressive educational agency in the communities we serve. To comply with our federal grant requirements, we must raise an additional \$25 for every \$100 received in federal funds. This equates to an annual Non-Federal share goal of approximately \$2.6 million, which we rely heavily on volunteers and community partners to meet.

Volunteers are our most valuable asset, and we deeply appreciate your support. There are many wonderful ways for caregivers, community members, and families to help Flowers Early Learning achieve our goal. We invite you to join us in our mission and make a meaningful impact on our community.

Each hour spent volunteering contributes \$21.11 towards our Non-Federal share goal.

How You Can Help:

- Volunteer in the Classroom: Spend time assisting teachers and engaging with students.
- Complete Weekly Skill-Building Activities: Work with your student on educational activities at home.
- Ride the Bus with Your Student: Help ensure students have a safe and positive experience on their way to and from school.
- Become a Policy Council Representative: Represent your center and contribute to organizational policies and strategies.
- Share Your Talents: Offer your unique skills and hobbies to enhance classroom experiences.
- Perform Office/Clerical Duties: Assist with administrative tasks at your student's center.
- Donate Items: Provide much-needed supplies for classrooms or centers.

For more information, please contact your student's teacher.

Thank you for your invaluable contribution to the mission of Flowers Early Learning. Together, we can make a difference!

General Information

Standards of Conduct

All adults on agency property and/or participating in agency activities must comply with these standards of conduct, report suspected violations of this policy according to the process defined in this policy and avoid any behavior which may negatively impact the health, mental health, or safety of children and adults involved in our programs. Agency leadership will notify the Office of Head Start and/or Michigan Child Care Licensing when necessary to comply with incident reporting requirements.

2025-2026 Family Handbook

Employees violating this policy are subject to disciplinary intervention up to, and including, termination. Volunteers and other adults violating this policy may be expelled from agency property and activities temporarily, or indefinitely, depending upon the nature of the offense.

Upon discovering a violation of this policy, teachers, preschool directors and other supervisors are authorized to temporarily suspend or remove any adult, including employees, contractors, volunteers, or other program participants, from agency property or agency-sponsored activities when necessary to protect participant health and safety.

Employees and volunteers must immediately report all suspected violations of this policy to an available supervisor and/or to Human Resources at (269) 657-2581.

Employees who reasonably suspect violations of this policy must immediately report their concerns to an available supervisor and/or Human Resources whether they witness the behavior or not.

Suspected abuse or neglect of a child must be reported to Health and Mental Health Services AND to Michigan Child Protective Services in accordance with Health Services Policy 609: Child Protective Services Policy and Procedure for Reporting Suspected Child Abuse and Neglect.

Standards of Conduct - HSPPS Section 1302.90(c)

1. A program must ensure that all staff, consultants, and volunteers abide by the program's standards of conduct that:
 - a. Ensure staff, consultants, contractors, and volunteers implement positive strategies to support children's well-being and prevent and address challenging behavior;
 - b. Ensure staff, consultants, contractors, and volunteers do not engage in behaviors that would be reasonably suspected to negatively impact the health, mental health, or safety of children, including at a minimum:
 - i. Corporal punishment or physically abusive behavior, defined as intentional use of physical force that results in, or has the potential to result in, physical injury. Examples include but are not limited to hitting, kicking, shaking, biting, pushing restraining, force feeding, or dragging.
 - ii. Sexually abusive behavior, defined as any completed or attempted sexual act, sexual contact, or exploitation. Examples include, but are not limited to, behaviors such as inappropriate touching, inappropriate filming, or exposing a child to other sexual activities.
 - iii. Emotionally harmful or abusive behavior, defined as behaviors that harm a child's self-worth or emotional well-being or behaviors that are insensitive to a child's developmental needs. Examples include, but are not limited to, using isolation as discipline, using or exposing a child to public or private humiliation, or name calling, shaming, intimidating, or threatening a child.
 - iv. Neglectful behavior, defined as the failure to meet a child's basic physical and emotional

2025-2026 Family Handbook

needs including access to food, education, medical care, appropriate supervision by an adequate caregiver, and safe physical and emotional environments. Examples include, but are not limited to, withholding food as punishment or refusing to change soiled diapers as punishment.

- c. Ensure staff, consultants, contractors and volunteers report reasonably suspected or known incidents of child abuse and neglect, as defined by the Federal Child Abuse Prevention and Treatment Act (CAPTA, 42 USC 5101) and in compliance with federal, state, local and tribal laws.
- d. Ensure staff, consultants, contractors and volunteers respect and promote the unique identity of each individual and do not stereotype on any basis, including gender, race, ethnicity, culture, religion, disability, sexual orientation, or family composition.
- e. Require staff, consultants, contractors, and volunteers to comply with program confidentiality policies concerning personally identifiable information about children, families, and other staff members in accordance with subpart C of part 1303 of this chapter and applicable federal, state, local, and tribal laws; and,
- f. Ensure no child is left alone or unsupervised.

Michigan Child Care Licensing Standards

In addition to the Head Start Standards of Conduct listed above, the following methods of punishment, discipline or other strategies to manage child behavior are prohibited:

- i. Hitting, spanking, shaking, biting, pinching, or inflicting other forms of corporal punishment.
- ii. Placing any substances in a child's mouth, including but not limited to, soap, hot sauce, or vinegar.
- iii. Restricting a child's movement by binding or tying him or her.
- iv. Inflicting mental or emotional punishment, such as humiliating, shaming, or threatening a child.
- v. Depriving a child of meals, snacks, rest, or necessary toilet use.
- vi. Excluding a child from outdoor play or other gross motor activities.
- vii. Excluding a child from daily learning experiences
- viii. Confining a child in an enclosed area, such as a closet, locked room, box, or similar enclosure.
- ix. Time out (isolation)

Adult Behavior Expectations:

All adults will resolve disagreements and conflicts in a manner that includes mutual respect among all parties. Unreasonable and/or disorderly behavior, language, or mannerisms that threaten, intimidate, demean, harass, or provoke employees or families, or are generally considered vulgar or offensive are not acceptable. Violence or threats of violence, either displayed, plainly stated, or implied will not be tolerated.

Child Abuse and Neglect

All Flowers staff are mandated by the Child Protection Law of Michigan to report to the Department of Human Services any suspected cases of abuse, neglect, child sexual abuse, or sexual exploitation.

Any staff member that suspects the abuse/neglect of a child will immediately make a verbal report to

2025-2026 Family Handbook

Children's Protective Services at 1 (855) 444-3911. Within 72 hours, a written report will be submitted to Children's Protective Services. This can be reported using Form 3200 located in the indicated RED folder in each classroom and on the Department's website.

The State of Michigan Child Protection Law provides for the protection of children from child abuse and neglect. Child abuse and neglect of children is against the law.

In addition, Licensing Rules for Child Care Centers require a written statement by staff and volunteers at the time of hiring or before volunteering to indicate all of the following information:

- The individual is aware that abuse and neglect of children is against the law.
- The individual has been informed of the school's policies on child abuse and neglect.
- The individual knows that all staff and volunteers are required by law to immediately report suspected abuse and neglect to children's protective services.

Staff and volunteers receive the required child abuse and neglect information at the time of hiring and before volunteering. In addition, all returning staff receive annual training at pre-service and new staff receive training during the new staff training plan.

Licensing and Safety

The safety and security of our students and staff is our main priority. Each staff member has an identification badge that they wear while at school locations. Our schools are always locked. Each school location creates a process for allowing guests and staff members into their building. The process includes determining who the guest is and why they are seeking access. If there is any suspicion about any guest coming into the school, they will not be allowed into the building until their identity can be confirmed. (NAEYC 10B.19 bullet 1)

Students are only released to the people listed by the parent or guardian on the Child Information Card. Staff will require identification at the school and bus stop if they do not know the person listed on the card. Bus staff checks the Child Information Card for each child at each bus stop before releasing the child. School staff checks the Child Information Card for each child who is picked up from the school before releasing the child. Students' arrival and departure times are documented. Caregivers are required to hold children's hands in our parking lots and at bus stops.

We frequently count students, and we ask that volunteers count with us. No volunteer is ever alone with students. We have two paid staff in every classroom and encourage family and community volunteers to visit at any time. Staff actively supervise children and volunteers at all times.

For the safety of our children and staff, each of our classrooms is equipped with a camera. This allows us to view classroom footage when needed.

Center Licensing

Center/Program Directors: Center/Program Directors have either a BA or AA in Early Childhood Education. In addition, all Program Directors have at least 2 semester hours in childcare administration. Program Directors have current certification in infant, child, and adult CPR, first aid, and blood-borne pathogen training. Program Directors exceed the minimum training requirements annually.

Inspections: Before a school is licensed the following inspections take place

2025-2026 Family Handbook

- **Fire Safety:** A Fire Safety Inspection is completed by a qualified fire safety inspector. After the initial license is issued, fire safety inspections occur every 4 years.
- **Environmental Health Inspections:** An environmental health inspection is completed by the local Health Department. After the initial license is issued, environmental health inspections occur every 2 years for schools that do not have public water/sewer or prepare food.
- **Lead Hazard Risk Assessment:** A Lead Hazard Risk Assessment is completed on all structures built before 1978. Any lead hazards identified are addressed as noted in the report.
- **Fuel-fired furnaces/water heaters:** Furnaces and water heaters are inspected by a licensed contractor. After the initial license is issued, they are inspected Every two years.
- **Boilers:** Boilers are inspected by a licensed contractor. After the initial license is issued, they are inspected as required by the State of Michigan parameters. These inspections are done at the state level and occur every 3 years. They schedule them as required by law.
- **Playground:** Playgrounds are inspected and approved by a National Playground Safety Institute Certified Playground Safety Inspector before use by children.
- **Lead Water Testing:** A Lead water test is completed at each Flowers Early Learning property.

Licensing Notebook Notification

Licensing regulations require that we inform families:

- The school maintains a licensing notebook of all licensing inspection reports, special investigation reports, and all related corrective action plans.
- The notebook is out and accessible to families for review during regular business hours.
- Licensing inspection and special investigation reports from the past 5 years are available on the Bureau of Children and Adult Licensing website at www.michigan.gov/michildcare.

Quality of Our Schools

Our classrooms are inspected and licensed by the State of Michigan's Licensing and Regulatory Affairs every two years. We consistently meet all regulations for Child Care Centers and the Head Start Performance Standards. We are also required to have Environmental Health and Fire Safety inspections. Staff working in our schools meet the educational requirements and have the experience required by the State of Michigan and Head Start Performance Standards. Our playgrounds have been inspected by a Certified Playground Safety Inspector. In 2024, Our program received the Program of Excellence accreditation, a prestigious honor that recognizes programs demonstrating exceptional performance in management, service, and outcomes for children, families, and communities.

We monitor the quality of our schools with regular visits and inspections throughout the year. We look at the buildings, equipment, activities, and interactions among children, staff, and family members. Children's safety and health are of primary concern and are monitored closely. Be assured that we are providing children and families with a high-quality preschool program.

Air Quality

To maintain good air quality in and around our schools, all Flowers Early Learning grounds are a smoke/vape-

2025-2026 Family Handbook

free zone. All schools are also No Idling Zones. We ask families and staff to turn off vehicles that are not moving because idling vehicles still create exhaust. The exhaust contributes to the formation of ozone smog and harmful particulate matter that can negatively affect lung growth and development in children. On occasion, a bus may need to idle to warm for a short time before school is dismissed to make it more comfortable for children. This is done with caution and away from buildings and school exits when possible. (NAEYC 5A.25)

Emergency Preparedness Plans

Every Flowers Early Learning classroom has an Emergency Preparedness Plan and a Crisis Kit. The purpose of the plan is to assist staff in responding to an emergency. Staff are responsible for ensuring the immediate safety of children and will coordinate with local public safety personnel. The Crisis Kit includes items staff may need in the event of a Crisis.

Fire and Tornado Drills

Classroom and bus fire and classroom tornado drills are practiced regularly. Staff, volunteers, and students participate in drills. Students are counted at the beginning of the drill, attendance is taken at the designated evacuation/safe location, and students are counted upon return to the classroom.

Integrated Pest Management Program

The Flowers Early Learning Integrated Pest Management program ensures that our school locations are routinely inspected and monitored for possible infestations of pests/rodents.

Locations are inspected monthly when students are not in attendance. Each location has a Rose Pest Management book that documents communication between staff and the technician, including what methods, if any, were used to treat any infestations. (NAEYC 9D.4)

If staff notice a problem, they submit a request using School Dude. The Flowers Early Learning Administrative Office contacts the pest management company or the person responsible at public school/church locations. Non- chemical methods are used for infestations whenever possible. If pesticides are needed, they are applied when students, staff, and volunteers are not present.

Families are notified in advance through the One Call Now system and a note is sent home. The advance notice includes the target pest or purpose, approximate location, date of the application, school contact information, and the toll-free number for the National Pesticide Information Center. Information is also available on our website: FlowersEarlyLearning.org

For additional pesticide information, call the National Pesticide Information Center: 1-800-858-7378.

Participant Protection

At no time is any individual permitted to possess any type of weapon, firearm, drug, drug paraphernalia, alcohol, or be under the influence of an illegal substance or alcoholic beverage on any Flowers Early Learning property. Threatening behavior or swearing will not be tolerated.

2025-2026 Family Handbook

Playground Procedures & Outdoor Play

Outdoor activities are planned daily, weather permitting. If the temperature is below 20 degrees or above 90 degrees, we do not go outside. We stay inside and engage students in indoor gross motor activities. Be sure your child dresses for outdoor play.

Pictures, Video, and Cell Phone Policy

The staff at Flowers Early Learning respects every individual's and family's right to privacy. In our commitment to ensure your privacy, we do not allow families or volunteers to photograph/video children. Families may photograph their own children. We obtain parent/guardian permission for Flowers Early Learning staff to photograph/video students in the classroom for our program materials and staff training.

We require cell phones to be off or the ringer set to vibrate in Flowers Early Learning classrooms when students are present. If you need to make or return a call, we ask that you leave the classroom.

Sharing of Data and Protections for the Privacy of Child Records in Flowers Early Learning

Flowers Early Learning maintains the privacy and confidentiality of records concerning children in our program. Flowers Early Learning also ensures the availability, usability, integrity, and security of data as per 45 C.F.R. §1302.101(b)(4) and Licensing R400.8143.

These protections cover information recorded in any way, such as print, electronic, or digital means, including media, video, image, or audio format.

Consistent with our "Need to Know" basis, Flowers Early Learning maintains Child Records in a manner that ensures only parents/guardians, and officials within Flowers Early Learning or acting on behalf of Flowers Early Learning have access to Child Records. Accordingly, we keep any paper records containing Personally Identifiable Information (PII) of children under lock and key, and any electronic or online records containing PII are password protected in our data management system. Users of the data management system have unique usernames and passwords, with access to PII of children according to job duties and necessity only.

Annual Notice

Flowers Early Learning requires that all families be notified of their rights about their child's records, in writing, on an annual basis. This information is signed at the time of the application or re-enrollment and families receive a copy of their PII rights.

If a parent/guardian requests, Flowers Early Learning will allow the parent/guardian to come on-site and review the information in their child's file. This must occur on-site, and the parent/guardian is not to take any documents, nor can they make copies of anything without completing a request for records.

2025-2026 Family Handbook

Storing Files

Flowers Early Learning keeps Child Records in the following places to maintain security: locked paper files in the Child Records File Room, in locked files in the classroom, and a password-protected data management system.

Requests for Files

Any requests made to access Child Information or Child Records are verified and authenticated as necessary before being disclosed to the requesting party. Flowers Early Learning keeps a record of all requests and items being requested from Child Files.

All efforts are made to notify families any time that a request has been made regarding their child's records if the request was not initiated by the family. In rare circumstances, child records may be shared with entities without the guardian's consent first. For example, court-ordered sharing, Child Protective Services requests, or during emergencies. Even in these rare circumstances, documentation is kept of the request and all procedures must be followed.

Revoking Privacy Disclosure

Parents/guardians may revoke their consent for Flowers Early Learning to share PII as necessary, at any time. If a parent/guardian revokes consent, revocation is not retroactive. Therefore, it does not apply to any action that occurred before the consent was revoked.