



# The Rise School

O F D E N V E R

## **FAMILY HANDBOOK**

Revised September 6, 2017

## Table of Contents

Welcome	p. 3
Our History	p. 3
Program Description	p. 4
Mission Statement	p. 5
Program Philosophy and Goals	p. 6
Licensing	p. 7
Supervision	p. 7
Program Staff	p. 7
Supported Employment Classroom Assistants	p. 8
University Students	p. 8
Volunteers	p. 8
Classrooms	p. 9
Teaching Strategies Developmental Continuum	p. 9
Screening and Assessment Process at Rise	p. 10
Parent / Teacher Meetings	p. 11
Confidentiality of Student Records	p. 11
Public Awareness	p. 11
Admission	p. 12
Termination of Services	p. 13
Tuition	p. 13
p. 10	
Financial Aid	p. 14
Parking	p. 14
The First Day/Week of School	p. 14
Arrival and Departure of Children	p. 14
Lunches and Snacks	p. 16
Supplies/Personal Items	p. 16
Clothing	p. 17
Nap Time	p. 17
Diapering and Toilet Training	p. 17
Positive Behavioral Support/Discipline Procedures	p. 18
Field Trips	p. 19
Communication Between School and Home	p. 20
Parent Involvement Opportunities	p. 20
Illnesses	p. 21
Medical Information	p. 22
Medications	p. 22
Injury to a Student	p. 24
Unscheduled School Closings	p. 25
Tornado Policy	p. 25
Health and Safety Procedures	p. 25

Relationship with Early Childhood Intervention Programs	p. 26
Transitions from one Rise Classroom to the Next	p. 27
Transition from Rise to other School Settings	p. 27
Visitors to the Center	p. 27
Procedure for Filing a Complaint about Child Care	p. 27
Policy Regarding the Reporting of Child Abuse	p. 28
Odds and Ends	p. 28
Parent Input, Suggestions and Concerns	p. 29

### **Welcome to The Rise School of Denver**

The Family Handbook is designed to provide families with an overview of the program and the basic philosophy, structure and standards of Rise, as well as the rules that guide our day-to-day operations.

Families are responsible to know and abide by the information contained within the Family Handbook. Please carefully review the Family Handbook. If you have a questions or concerns, please seek additional information or clarification from the director.

### **Our History**

In 2001, a group of five families who had children with Down syndrome began meeting and discussing the needs of their children and what the Denver Area had to offer. After visiting and studying the existing preschool programs in Denver, both public and private, and after visiting the Rise Schools in both Dallas and Houston, the group decided that the Rise School was far and away the best program available to give children with developmental delays the foundation they need to be successful in kindergarten or first grade.

Under the long-term leadership of Dr. Martha Cook, the Rise Program at the Stallings Center in Tuscaloosa, Alabama, has developed and implemented an effective early childhood special education approach for toddlers and preschoolers who have developmental delays. A unique component of the program is the integration of children who have developmental delays with peers who do not, resulting in children's achievements beyond previous expectations. With enthusiasm and encouragement from Dr. Cook and the Rise School of Dallas, the core group formed Friends of Children with Down Syndrome of Colorado, Inc., a Colorado Nonprofit

Corporation, in April 2002, and proceeded to raise the necessary funds to establish the Rise School of Denver. The Rise School of Denver is approved by the Internal Revenue Service as a 501(c) (3) Nonprofit Organization.

### **Program Description/General Schedule/Operations**

The Rise School of Denver is an inclusive, therapeutic preschool whose mission is to provide the highest quality early childhood education to typically developing children and children with developmental delays. We are one of six Rise Schools located across the country. All of the Rise Schools follow The Rise School Operating Agreement, which makes the Rise School program unique and effective in these ways:

- Highly educated staff – All Rise Lead Teachers have earned, or are working toward a Master’s degree in Early Childhood Special Education. All Teaching Assistants have a Bachelor’s degree in a related field or a combination of education and experience, which satisfies the Group Leader qualifications as determined by the State of Colorado (<http://1.usa.gov/11x0ZI5>)
- Low student-to-teacher ratio of 3-to-1
- Early intervention – Rise accepts typically developing and children with special needs at 12 months of age. Research has shown that the earlier children receive intervention and begin a school program, the better they will transition, socialize and develop in elementary school and onward.
- Full time schedule - The school operates from 8:00 am to 2:30 pm, eleven months out of the year. The full preschool day gives our teachers and therapists maximum opportunities to work with the children to achieve their educational and therapeutic goals. We also offer before-school care from 7-8am and after-school care from 2:30-5:30pm each day for an additional charge.
- Integrated therapy – Therapy is delivered into all the classrooms twice a week per discipline, and includes speech, occupational therapy, physical therapy and music therapy. Therapy goals are educationally relevant and are implemented collaboratively by the therapists and teaching staff.

In order for children to maximally benefit from our educational services, parents are strongly encouraged to bring their children prior to 8:30am each day. Please reconsider bringing your child to school after 10:30am on any given day, as most of the educational and therapeutic programming takes place in the morning hours. We have found that children have a difficult time transitioning into school if they are not able to participate in the morning activities.

During the typical school day, each child will generally follow a schedule that includes individual, small group, and large group activities, gross motor play indoors and outdoors, lunch, and rest time. The day is scheduled to include as many learning opportunities as possible within the domains of cognitive, speech/language, social-emotional, and fine and gross motor development.

Rise offers occupational, speech, physical, and music therapies using a collaborative/consultation service delivery model. The teachers and teaching assistants, with the guidance of the therapists, deliver therapy-based services through a transdisciplinary approach in which the therapeutic activities are integrated into the daily routine of each classroom. The therapists monitor the activities on a regular basis. Using this approach, therapy is delivered in an efficient manner during the child's school day. Recommendations are also provided to families for carry-over in the home and other natural environments.

Based on individual children's needs, families may be provided information about supplemental direct therapies available in the community and are strongly encouraged to continue any supplemental therapies their child receives. Rise therapists may opt to confer with the child's outside therapists, as consented to by families.

The Rise School honors a child's home language and will encourage a child's home language development whenever possible by incorporating the language into the program. If there is a dominant second language in the student body, and the Board of Directors and Executive Director deem it financially feasible, a bilingual teacher may become part of the program.

## **Mission Statement**

The mission of The Rise School of Denver is to provide the highest quality early childhood education to all children, including those with developmental delays as well as:

- Provide exemplary services based on recommended practices to young children with diverse abilities and their families;
- Offer instructional opportunities through collaboration with various academic units in higher education;
- Interface with the community through outreach activities;
- Disseminate information and provide assistance to other community-based agencies;
- Affect policy and systems change at the local, state, and national levels.

## **Program Philosophy and Goals**

The goals of Rise are to (a) provide family-centered services designed to meet the individualized needs of all children and families; (b) provide a blend of educational and therapy services within the context of a developmentally appropriate curriculum; and (c) to prepare children for their next educational environment. The program adheres to the philosophy and recommended practices of both early childhood special education and general early childhood education. The philosophy is based on the following premises:

1. Services are family-centered with particular emphasis placed on the family as the primary decision-maker in each child's program.
2. The assessment process is dynamic and ongoing and includes multiple procedures, information sources, and settings. Assessment is linked to instruction.
3. Services are designed around an individualized plan consisting of goals and outcomes based on families' concerns, priorities and resources, the child's strengths and needs, and expectations of the next environment.
4. Services are offered that vary in intensity and structure, based on the individual and group needs of the children and their families.
5. Children's development is promoted in all areas including gross and fine motor skills, independence, cognitive skills, social competence and emotional growth, and communication.

6. Therapy services (occupational therapy, physical therapy, speech therapy, and music therapy) are provided within the context of the educational environment using an integrated approach. Therapy goals are educationally relevant and are planned and implemented collaboratively by the therapists and teaching staff.
7. The foundation of the learning environment and activities is based on general early childhood education guidelines, which are blended with recommended practices from early childhood special education.
8. Specially designed instruction and curricular adaptations and accommodations are embedded in the daily activities of the classroom.
9. The curriculum is designed to foster children's self-confidence, self-esteem, and curiosity.
10. The curriculum is guided by functional objectives that support children in their current environment, and prepare them for more inclusive environments.
11. The curriculum reflects a balance between child-initiated and teacher-supported activities.
12. The program addresses the children's transitions from one classroom to another, and transitions to other more inclusive educational environments.

### **Licensing**

The Rise School of Denver is licensed by the Division of Child Care of the Colorado Department of Human Services under the Child Care Licensing Act. Rise adheres to the standards set forth in the General Rules for Child Care Facilities, as well as the Rules Regulating Child Care Centers and the Rules and Regulations Governing the Sanitation of Child Care Centers in the State of Colorado.

### **Supervision of Children**

The Rise School of Denver maintains the highest level of quality by maintaining adult/child ratios that are maximally beneficial. The classrooms have the instructional support of one (1) Lead Teacher, and at least two (2) Teaching Assistants. Additionally, there are therapists, approved volunteers, and university students who provide instruction and assistance in the classrooms to ensure that the children receive individual help if needed.

## **Program Staff**

The Rise School of Denver staff currently consists of the following positions:

- One (1) Director
- Two (2) part-time Office Assistants
- Four (4) Lead Teachers
- Nine (9) Teaching Assistants
- Speech therapy, physical therapy, occupational therapy, music therapy and nursing are provided by outside consultants

Background checks are conducted for all staff and consultants who work at Rise.

## **Supported Employment- Self-Advocate/Teacher's Helper**

The Rise School provides supported employment opportunities to people with disabilities. A supported employment Teacher's Helper receives on-the-job training from job coaches until they have learned their job.

## **University Students**

The Rise mission reflects a partnership with higher education in the areas of teaching, service and research. Affiliations with other institutions are important for achieving this mission. The Rise staff is pivotal in developing relationships with colleges and universities that benefit both groups. Often, university students assist in the classrooms and work directly with the children. Typically, practicum students and interns are enrolled in programs in education, human development and family studies, speech/language pathology, occupational therapy, and recreational rehabilitation. The obligations of the Rise staff in this mission include:

- Orientation
- Classroom assignments
- Sign-in/out procedures
- Hands-on teaching
- Evaluation and feedback to professionals

Any research project completed at Rise has to be approved by the director. The participation of

the children must be authorized by the parents.

### **Volunteers**

Volunteers may be utilized in your child's class to assist in the preparation and individualization of activities or in the office and other aspects of the school. Some of these volunteers may be from the Community Service Programs at local high schools, college preparatory and the community.

### **Classrooms**

The Rise School of Denver currently has four classes with students ranging in age from 12 months to seven years. Each classroom is licensed for 9 to 12 students. We strive to have a ratio of 50% of students who have a developmental delay, and 50% of students who are typically developing.

### **Teaching Strategies Developmental Continuum**

At Rise, we believe that authentic, ongoing assessment of children is the key to planning developmentally appropriate learning experiences that respond to children's individual interests, learning styles, and abilities. The Teaching Strategies Developmental Continuum allows the teachers and therapists to gather authentic observations of the children during the daily routines of the classroom. Teachers and therapists then use this information to follow a child's individual development and plan individualized and group times for the children, thereby linking assessment to planning.

The Developmental Continuum is divided into two age ranges: Infants & Toddlers and Preschoolers. The Preschool Continuum includes Expanded Forerunners. The Expanded Forerunners were developed to assure that all children, including those with special education needs, have access to the general curriculum and are working towards the same standards as their typically developing peers.

At Rise, we will use Teaching Strategies Gold to score and manage the developmental continuum. TS Gold allows our team to observe and record their observations.

In fall and spring, at Parent Teacher Conferences, teachers will use the Creative Curriculum Developmental Continuum to create a developmental report for each child showing the progress they have made during the year. Looking at the “whole child,” parents, teachers, and therapists will collaboratively plan the next steps for each child. Ongoing observation will allow the team to continue to monitor each child’s development and plan accordingly.

### **Screening and Assessment Process at Rise**

During the first six weeks of enrollment, the teacher and therapists will complete curriculum-based and standardized assessments for all children who are new to Rise and assessments will be conducted ongoing throughout the year. Parents will be requested to provide input during the assessment process. Goals and objectives based on the child's strengths and needs will be developed at this time.

The Ages and Stages Questionnaire (ASQ) and Ages and Stages Questionnaire-Social Emotional (ASQ-SE) are simple, parent friendly, easy-to-use screening tools that help to monitor children’s development. ASQ and ASQ-SE will be sent home early in the school year for parents of typically developing children to complete at home. Parents will return the ASQ and ASQ-SE, allowing time for teachers to review and score. The results of the ASQ and ASQ-SE will be discussed at the October Parent/Teacher conferences.

Information on ASQ and ASQ-SE from **[www.agesandstages.com](http://www.agesandstages.com)**

- Professionals rely on ASQ for the best developmental and social-emotional screening for children from age one month to 5 ½ years. Highly reliable and valid, ASQ looks at strengths and trouble spots, educates parents about developmental milestones, and incorporates parents’ expert knowledge about their children.
- ASQ has repeatedly been shown to correctly flag children who have delays and exclude those who do not. Extensive and continuing testing has shown that ASQ has high rates of reliability, validity, and accuracy.

- Because of the rapid changes in the early years, the American Academy of Pediatrics and others recommend that infants and young children be screened on a regular and periodic basis. Professionals can use each age-specific ASQ questionnaire at intervals to watch for and catch developmental and social-emotional delays that may not be detected in a single screening.
- Studies show that parents' observations of their children are very good predictors of developmental delays. Parent-report tools are far less costly than professional-observation tools, and they save professionals time.
- We use the Mullen Scales of Early Learning assessment for our children with special needs. This is a norm-based assessment which measures all areas of development and is administered by the therapists at the Rise School. Results are used to help determine student goals and to track the progress of students throughout their time at the Rise School.

### **Parent Teacher Meetings**

Parent Teacher meetings are held twice a year for all students to discuss student progress. For students with special needs, these conferences include the therapists, as they are available. Goals and objectives are reviewed and revised to reflect progress through the curriculum, based on the assessments. Parents are welcome to request a meeting with their child's teacher, therapists or the director at any time.

### **Confidentiality of Student Records**

A child's records are open only to the parent(s) or legal guardian, the Rise staff, contract therapists and the Division of Child Care of the Colorado Department of Human Services. Records will only be released to others with written authorization from the parent or legal guardian, as included in the "Consent Form for Mutual Exchange of Information" in the student's folder.

### **Public Awareness**

We are very proud of The Rise School of Denver and are happy to tour interested families, professionals and supporters of the school. As part of our public awareness and fundraising

activities, Rise also utilizes a variety of photographs and videotapes of the children and the classes in accordance with written parental consent.

### **Admission**

Children with developmental delays are eligible for admission at the age of 12 months. Typically developing children are eligible for admission at the age of 12 months. The admission process begins with a tour of the school. Tours are scheduled by the Director. Parents are encouraged to bring their child with them for the tour. Children are enrolled on a first-come, first-serve basis, depending on availability in the most developmentally appropriate class. Children must be able to benefit from participation in a group setting. Children are placed on the wait list if there is no availability in the most appropriate class. If, after a tour and discussion of the child's needs, it is determined that The Rise School is not a good fit for the child, The Rise School will attempt to give resources and information about other programs that may benefit the child and family. If, after a period of time, the director and teaching/therapy team begin to question whether or not a current child is benefiting from the Rise School model, the director will engage in honest conversations with the family about how to best support the child within the model, or how to assist in the transition of the child to a program that can better meet the child's needs.

After parents are notified of an admission date, the application packet needs to be completed. This includes the Health Professional Assessment and immunization record, which both need to be signed by a physician, and the emergency authorization form, which needs to be notarized. In addition, a non-refundable registration fee of \$100.00 is due, along with a \$250.00 deposit. The deposit is non-refundable but will be credited toward the first month's tuition. Parents of children with developmental delays are asked to provide any Early Childhood Intervention (ECI) records, medical records, and outside therapy records that may help the teachers and therapists get to know your child. Tuition is due on the first day of each month. If a child enrolls mid-month, her tuition will be prorated for that month and due on the first day of enrollment. Rise does not discriminate on the basis of race, color, and national or ethnic origin.

### **Termination of Services at Rise**

A child's placement may be terminated from the Rise School Program if the parents demonstrate a pattern of disregard for the established policies and procedures. A written notice will be provided to parents concerning the possibility of termination and followed by written notice of termination if needed. Examples of reasons for termination include: (a) extended absences that have not been explained; (b) blatant disregard of the school's operating hours; (c) failure to complete required forms; (d) consistent disregard of the illness policy; (e) habitually delinquent tuition payment; (f) one-on-one intensive needs that cannot be met at The Rise School; and (g) failure to collaborate positively with the faculty and/or staff in a way that reflects the mission and goals of The Rise School.

### **Tuition**

Monthly tuition is dependent on class and child's needs. Please see the web site for current tuition rates: [www.risedenver.org](http://www.risedenver.org). Tuition rates for children with special needs include the cost of attending school full-time and the integrated therapies the children receive throughout the day from a highly qualified staff. Tuition rates for typically developing children are based on either full-time attendance, three-day attendance (Monday/Wednesday/Friday) or two-day attendance (Tuesday/Thursday). The actual costs to operate the school are considerably more than the tuition per student. Community support and various fundraising programs supply the difference.

Tuition is based on the full year program costs with eleven (11) equal monthly installments due by the 1st of each month. Because we usually break for summer in mid-July, and return in mid-August, we charge full tuition for the month of July, and no tuition in the month of August.

Tuition is not reduced during school breaks, family vacations, schedule adjustments or absences unless there are unforeseen circumstances that must be approved by the director and the board. After the 15<sup>th</sup> of the month, a \$15.00 late fee will be assessed, with a \$35.00 fee in the case of returned checks.

A \$100 non-refundable registration fee is due in the spring to hold each child's spot for the next school year. A \$250 non-refundable deposit due at the same time that will be credited toward September's tuition. This advanced payment is required so that families on the wait

list can be provided sufficient notice of classroom spaces available if your plans for the following school year change.

### **Financial Aid**

Financial aid may be available to those who qualify, depending upon grants and donations that we have received specifically to be used for financial aid. Financial assistance awards range from 10% to 50% of the regular tuition cost, based on a family's demonstrated need. To apply for financial aid, please complete an application through our FAST online financial aid program at: <https://www.ismfast.com/FastPage.php?id=460e93846c77155ef82bfc4b83bf047b>.

### **Parking**

Parking is available directly in front of The Rise School. Overflow parking is available on Eastman Avenue.

### **The First Day/Week of School**

The first day of school can be intimidating for some children (and parents!) Here are some helpful hints for reducing separation anxiety:

- Reassure your child that you will be back to pick him/her up.
- Don't linger. Be brief. Reassure your child, give a snuggle, then be on your way!
  - Let your child bring a comfort item from home (a blanket, stuffed toy or other small item) especially if needed to help him/her nap.

### **Arrival and Departure of Children**

#### Arrival Time:

- Children should arrive between 8:00am and 8:30am. If you are late, please be respectful of the teacher and other students and enter the classroom quietly or remain in the hall if indicated.
- If you are not able to bring your child to school by 10:30am, please reconsider bringing them that day. Often it is hard for the child to adapt to the routine mid-day.
- Please sign in your child upon arrival.

- Please assist your child with washing their hands as they enter the classroom. Apply sunscreen if necessary, and communicate any health issues or recent injuries to the child's teachers.
- A parent or guardian should contact the Rise School Director or leave a message for the teacher if their child will be absent or late to school that day.

Departure Time:

- We ask that you be prompt about picking your children up at the 2:30pm dismissal time. Please call if you are running late, so we can let your child and your child's teacher know. If you have not arrived by 2:45pm, your child will be taken to after-school care and a drop-in after care charge will be added to your account. (Please see the Extended Care Tuition Agreement for current rates.) Your child will only be released to you (the parent or guardian) or to a person that you have designated, in writing as authorized to pick up your child. The *Child Release Authorization Form* must be completed before your child's first day of school. If emergency changes need to be made, please call the school to inform the Rise staff of the change and to allow them to prepare your child for the change in plans. Because of safety and liability, a child is released only to authorized persons. If an unauthorized person comes for your child, we will not release your child.
- Each child should be signed out upon departure. If you or an authorized person fails to pick-up your child by 5:30pm, the child will remain supervised in his/her classroom and the teacher or director will call you or the emergency number you have provided. The child will remain under supervision until you (the parent or guardian) or a person that you have designated in writing can pick up your child.
- For safety's sake, children must never be left without direct transfer to an adult. Therefore, children must always be brought directly to the classroom and signed in each day. An authorized adult must return to the classroom to pick up the child and sign them out at the end of the day.

## **Lunches and Snacks**

Children should eat breakfast before they arrive in the morning. Lunches need to be sent with the children each day. Lunch is served each day between 11:00 a.m. and 12:15pm (see your child's teacher for a specific classroom schedule). Snacks are provided by parents on a teacher-assigned basis and are given mid-morning. When it is your turn to provide snack, we request that you bring nutritional snacks such as: fruit, cheese, applesauce, yogurt, graham crackers, cheerios, goldfish, pretzels, cereal and milk, fruit, rice cakes, fruit bars, and crackers. For all classes, please refrain from bringing items that may cause choking (i.e. nuts, raisins, popcorn, hot dogs.) Feel free to ask your child's teacher for suggestions. Water is served with snacks unless otherwise requested. Alternative snacks are sometimes used as part of the curriculum and/or related to a weekly theme. Parents should communicate with teachers about any dietary restrictions and/or allergies.

## **Supplies/Personal Items**

Parents are responsible for sending the following:

1. The **child's personal supplies**, including:
  - an extra change of clothing;
  - disposable diapers;
  - a crib sheet, blanket and any items a child uses during nap time;
  - Sunscreen (year round);
  - Change of weather appropriate clothing and shoes
  - Seasonal: winter coat, hat, gloves/mittens, boots as needed.
2. The **child's lunch and/or bottles** (if used) each day. Please use a cold pack in your child's lunch if you pack perishable items. The program provides plates, cups, spoons, and bibs.
3. All personal belongings and food items should be clearly labeled with the child's name.
4. Personal toys may be brought to school, depending on the teacher's policy for the class. Sometimes, teachers ask that shared toys be kept in the children's cubbies or backpacks.

### **Clothing**

Children are encouraged to wear comfortable clothing and shoes each day. Be aware that daily activities include active and messy play. Teachers make an effort to protect clothing during art activities and eating by utilizing oversized t-shirts or smocks however, clothes worn at school may get soiled. A change of clothes should be kept at school in the child's cubby. As Denver weather can change drastically throughout the day, please be sure to bring layers, shoes, jackets, coats, mittens, hats and boots when seasonally appropriate.

### **Nap Time**

Following lunch time, nap mats will be laid out and the room (made dark to be conducive to sleeping.) Children are not required to sleep, but are required to rest quietly for a time on their mats. Parents are requested to bring a crib sheet and blanket for their child. They will be sent home to be washed at the end of each week, to be returned again on Monday.

### **Diapering And Toilet Training**

Diapering and toilet training is conducted only by those who are regular/permanent staff members at The Rise School of Denver, and have been trained in diapering and toileting procedures. Teachers and Teaching Assistants will change your child's diapers regularly throughout the day and staff will periodically check your child in an attempt to assure he or she remains dry and clean. For any child requiring diapers, the parent or guardian will be required to maintain a supply of diapers and wipes for their child. Your child's teacher or other staff member will notify you when the supply of diapers is getting low. The diapers should be clearly marked with your child's name and placed in the storage bin designated for your child, along with any lotions or creams the child may need. Should your child need any special care or attention when diaper changing, please provide written instructions to the teacher upon admission. The Rise School staff is able to apply lotions or creams to children only to prevent a rash or dry skin. If skin is already broken out in a rash, a signed medication release by both parent and doctor is necessary (Please refer to Medication Administration Policy---available in the Director's office).

All diapers will be changed only on a designated diaper-changing table. Staff will wear protective gloves and will place the soiled diapers in a plastic bag for disposal or, in the case of reusable diapers, in a plastic bag to be sent home. Cloth diapers will not be rinsed, however, staff will attempt to dispose of stools prior to sealing the diaper in a plastic bag. Clothing that is soiled or stained cannot legally be rinsed out by the teaching staff but will be placed in a sealed plastic bag and will be placed in your child's backpack.

The Rise School staff will assist you in toilet training your child when he or she is ready. Your child's teacher will consult with you when that time comes.

### **Positive Behavioral Support/Discipline Procedures**

The staff members of The Rise School of Denver provide behavioral support and use discipline measures that demonstrate kindness and compassion, but also firmness and consistency. Every attempt is made to help children gain the confidence and knowledge that is needed to develop independence. Staff will immediately interfere to prevent children from hurting themselves or others, or destroying property. Promoting positive behaviors is a primary goal for our children in the classroom setting.

Guidelines for promoting positive behaviors follow:

- Classroom rules are simple and geared toward the children's developmental level;
- Teachers and Teaching Assistants serve as models of appropriate behaviors;
- Raising voices at children and frequent use of the word "no" are not acceptable or appropriate staff interactions with the children;
- Children will be praised for following the rules and for modeling positive behaviors; and
- Children will be reminded of the rules, and the classroom staff will consistently enforce limits.

Unacceptable behaviors will be dealt with using the following guidelines:

- Consistent responses and consequences to unacceptable behavior;
- Planned ignoring;

- Redirecting; and
- Taking breaks.

Staff behaviors that are prohibited at Rise include:

- Physical or aggressive punishment of any type;
- Withdrawal of food, nap, or bathroom opportunities;
- Abusive, profane, or derogatory language, including yelling and belittling;
- Any form of public or private humiliation; and
- Any form of emotional abuse.

### **Field Trips**

Throughout the year, field trips may be scheduled. Parents must provide written consent or permission in order for the child to participate. Children may not participate if written permission is not provided. All field trips are closely supervised. Parents are encouraged to participate. Field trips may include walking to a nearby location or being transported off campus.

### **Vehicle Safety Policy**

The Rise School of Denver does not provide transportation for students or staff for off-campus outings. For off-campus outings, parent volunteers transport students/staff in personal vehicles. All parents are required to provide proper car seats for their own children and also sign a permission form for their children to ride with another adult. ALL drivers are required to present a current copy of their driver's license and proof of insurance to The Rise School prior to departure.

If the Rise School schedules a field trip or other excursion, a notice of the scheduled trip will be sent home with the child in advance with a written permission slip to be signed and returned by the parent or guardian of the child. The child's teacher will be responsible for coordinating transportation for the class. Advance notice of departure time will be given to parents. If a child should arrive to school after the departure of the class, the child will not be able to participate in school that day.

From time to time, weather permitting, classes will take local walks. Students will be kept a safe distance from any hazards or roads. Teachers will maintain structure by utilizing wagons for students that need extra support as well as buddies and extra teacher control as needed.

### **Lost Child Procedure**

In the event that a child is determined to be missing, the following procedure will be followed:

1. Staff will determine when and where the child was last seen. Staff will remain calm, and keep the other children calm.
2. Staff will (if possible) consider the state of mind of the child. Was she scared, frustrated, attempting to run away? Did she fall behind?
3. Staff will conduct a search of the immediate area with other available staff. Staff will ask nearby children and staff if they have seen or know where the child is. Before leaving the rest of the group to find a child, staff will see that the group is supervised by other staff members. Available employees will monitor front entrance and playground gates/exits, while other employees begin looking for the child within the building.
4. Staff will check bathrooms, gym, other classrooms, playgrounds.
5. Staff will contact the Director and/or other administrative personnel about the situation. Staff will identify the missing child, when and where she was last seen, and provide a description of the child, including clothing worn. The Director will organize an extended search. If the child is not found in 10 minutes, the Director will contact the police department and the child's parents.
6. Staff will remain calm and positive, acknowledge the other children's fears, and move on to the next activity.
7. Staff will complete an incident report and any other reports requested.

### **Communication Between School and Home**

Families are welcome visitors in the program at all times. Parents are encouraged to observe at Rise anytime. Additionally, parents are encouraged to communicate with teachers regularly. Teachers will notify parents, in writing, of significant or special events that are happening at Rise. Parents are encouraged to send notes to school concerning special events at home. A school-wide newsletter is distributed monthly to parents. Parents can leave a voicemail for the

any teacher via the main office at 303-756-7473. If parents have an emergency, the school office will get a message to the classroom teacher immediately. The best time to talk with teachers is after 2:30 p.m., when the children have left school for the day. Parents are encouraged to schedule a time if they need to talk to teachers for any reason regarding their child.

Progress notes from the therapists for children with special needs will be sent home monthly. Each teacher also has a system for communicating with parents. White message boards in each class will provide daily information about the theme and therapy for each day, as well as the child's eating, sleeping, and toileting behaviors during the day.

### **Parent Involvement Opportunities**

Parents are a key component to the Rise School's programming and to their children's education. In the early years, The Rise School of Denver was founded and run by parent volunteers entirely. Today, to keep costs manageable and sustain operations, parents are asked to play an active role in supporting the school. At the beginning of the year, a Volunteer Opportunities sign-up sheet is distributed to all parents. Teachers, staff and board members will call upon parents to volunteer throughout the year. All families commit to volunteer at least 20 hours throughout the school year with a fundraising event or other school activity. In addition, it is expected that parents will actively recruit their friends, families and employers to participate and/or sponsor one of our annual fundraising events. Contributing to The Rise School financially, or providing services directly benefits your child and all children enrolled. As a 501 (c) (3) organization, donations to The Rise School of Denver are tax deductible and through the Colorado Child Care Contribution Tax Credit, are eligible to be refunded up to 50% or as available by the state. Please consult your tax advisor.

Rise tries to offer social and educational opportunities for parents throughout the year. Past topics have included potty training and kindergarten readiness. We have also hosted Parents' Nights Out, where teachers or assistants provide child care at the school, so that parents can have an evening out alone or with other Rise families. We find that these opportunities help foster the community feeling at Rise, whereby parents can pick up valuable tools for educating and caring for their children, serve as valuable resources for one another, and develop lasting friendships.

## **Illnesses**

Families will be expected to notify the staff of any illness or circumstances indicating an absence. Exclusion from school will be based on the needs of the sick child and the other children in the classroom. Generally speaking, if the child is: not able to participate in usual activities (very tired, irritable or excessive crying); needs more individual care than program staff can provide; or demonstrates symptoms listed on the exclusion list, they will need to be excluded from school. **Please refer to the Illness Policy you received with your admission packet for “When to Keep Your Child at Home.”** In case of a communicable disease, and at the discretion of the Director, other parents will be notified to watch for symptoms in their children.

As per state mandated regulations, **children may not be sent to school if the following illnesses are present, or have been present within the past twenty-four hours.** The existence of a communicable disease including the following:

1. Chicken pox
2. Conjunctivitis (pink eye)
3. Hepatitis A
4. Impetigo (bacterial skin infection)
5. Body rash (with fever)
6. Strep throat
7. Vaccine preventable diseases
8. Vomiting
9. Fever accompanied by other symptoms or behavior changes  
(Children must be fever-free for 24 hours before they may return to school.)
10. Existence of lingering illness that would inhibit the child's participation in classroom activities or outside play. Parents will be notified if their child becomes ill at school and arrangements need to be made to pick them up. Parents must supply home, work, and emergency phone numbers. Parents should notify the school of the times when (a) the child will be absent from school; and (b) the parents will not be at their regular address or phone number, so as to ensure they may be reached at all times, not just in case of an

emergency. The Rise Program enforces the same standards in preventing employees from working while sick.

The Director shall report to the Colorado Department of Public Health and Environment any communicable illness, including but not limited to measles, mumps, diphtheria, rubella, tuberculosis, shigella, hepatitis, meningitis, salmonella, or giardia, contracted by a Rise staff member or child at the Rise School.

### **Medical Information**

Prior to admission of a child with disabilities, parents will provide any pertinent medical records on the child. Prior to admission, and updated on an annual basis, the *Health Professional Assessment* must be completed by a physician for all children. This form provides the documentation of a physical examination and a record of the child's immunizations. Because we regularly serve children who are immunocompromised, The Rise School does not allow immunization exemptions, unless it is a medical exemption, signed by a physician, and reviewed and approved by our nurse consultant.

Special medical procedures such as catheterization, tube feeding, the delivery of oxygen, seizure action plans etc., require permission from the child's parent(s) and orders from the physician. Specific permission forms will be supplied by the child's teacher or the school office..

### **Medications**

To ensure safe and accurate administration of routine medications to all children in school, the nurse consultant will delegate and supervise the task of medication administration only to those care providers and staff members who have completed the approved Medication Administration Training.

Because the administration of medication requires extra staff time and safety considerations, parents should check with their health care provider to see if a dosage schedule can be arranged that does not involve the hours the child is in school.

When it is absolutely necessary for a medication to be given at the Rise School the following requirements must be met before administering medications.

- Written Authorization from the Health Care Provider
- Parent Written Authorization
- Medication in the original labeled container
- Proper care and storage of medication
- Documentation of medication administration

Nebulized medications and emergency injections (EpiPen®) require a written health care plan or instructions completed by the RN consultant and/or the child's health care provider.

Parents are responsible for providing all medications and supplies to the school/child care program. In most situations, children should not transport medications to and from school/childcare; this includes medication placed in a diaper bag or backpack.

Program staff may not deviate from the written authorization from the Health Care Provider with prescriptive authority. Program staff must count and record the quantity of controlled substances (e.g., Ritalin®) received from the parent, in the presence of the parent.

Medications that have expired or are no longer being used at the center should be returned to the parent or guardian. If the medicine has not been picked up within one week of the date of the request, then medication must be disposed of by a medication trained person or the RN, according to established procedures.

### **Injury to a Student**

Children are under visual supervision by an adult at all times. Staff will be proactive in making sure that the areas occupied by children are free from preventable hazards. Staff will promptly intervene if children are observed engaging in unsafe play.

If a student is injured, the staff member(s) who witnessed the injury will assess the extent of the injury. If the injury is determined by the staff member to be minor, first aid will be administered and the child comforted. The parent will be notified by the teacher as soon as possible prior to pickup time.

Staff members administering first aid will wear plastic gloves if the injury involves broken skin, bleeding, and/or exposure to bodily fluids. If the staff member determines that the injury is serious and that professional help may be needed, the staff member will notify the Director immediately. The team will decide the appropriate action to take including calling the parent to take the child to the doctor or calling 911. A staff member is not permitted to transport an injured child to her home or to a medical facility.

If 911 is called, the caller will give the following information:

- Self identification
- Identity of injured person and nature of injury
- Time of injury
- Location of injured child
- Pre-existing medical conditions or allergies to medications
- Current medications taken

If 911 is called following the above consultation, the parent will also be called immediately thereafter. A staff member will be selected to accompany the student in the ambulance if the student is taken from school to a medical facility for treatment. The parent will be notified of the medical facility destination. The staff member will stay with the student at least until the parent has arrived. The Director will follow-up with the parent regarding the status of the student's condition until the student returns to school.

As soon as possible, and within 24 hours following any incident resulting in injury to a child, the observing staff member will complete the *Incident Report* form to document the injury. The

Report will be given to the Director to sign. A copy will be given to parent by pick-up time the day of the incident if possible. A copy will also be kept on file in the office.

### **Unscheduled School Closings**

In case of snow or severe weather, Rise will close or delay the opening of school. Since the Rise School is located within its jurisdictional area, guidance on school closures will be obtained from the Denver School District. If Denver Public Schools are closed, The Rise School of Denver will also be closed. Local television stations will be notified so that the information can be posted. Parents will also be called if the school will close early due to snow or severe weather.

### **Tornado Policy**

Should the threat of severe weather or tornadoes occur, the children will be instructed on what to do and where to go in the event of a tornado warning.

- The staff will first ensure children's safety by leading all children into the hall area.
- Children will sit on the floor with arms and hands crossed over their heads.
- The staff will count children to make sure all are accounted for.
- One staff member per classroom will stay with the children while another staff member closes all windows and doors.
- Children will be released to parents once the severe weather or tornado warning is over.

### **Health and Safety Procedures**

- Fire drills and severe weather drills are conducted throughout the year to assure the staff and children are able to evacuate the building quickly and safely (fire) or go to the designated safe area in the building (severe weather). Evacuation routes are posted in each of the classrooms.
- In the event of a building evacuation, the children will be led to the University Hills Lutheran School building immediately east of the The Rise School's building.
- Should it be necessary to evacuate the entire University Hills Lutheran Church area, the children will be led to Bradley Elementary School, 3051 South Elm Street, 303-756-8386. The children will be led north on Dahlia Street to Plum Place and go east on Plum Place

to South Elm Street. They will then be led north on South Elm Street to the entrance of the school. The children and teachers will gather in the cafeteria/gym of Bradley Elementary School and await further instructions from the Director.

- All classrooms maintain a first aid kit.
- The children and staff wash their hands as often as required by childcare regulations.
- Frequently mouthed and handled objects/toys are washed and sanitized between uses by the children.
- Diaper changing and toileting are performed in a separate area of the classroom. Gloves are always worn by staff when diapering or assisting children with toileting. Latex-free gloves are used. Soiled diapers and clothing are kept in separate, closed containers. Changing tables are sterilized after each use.
- All classroom materials used by the children or staff such as towels, washcloths, bibs, and sheets are washed after each use.
- All electrical outlets have safety covers.
- All instructional staff and the Director are certified in Child and Infant CPR and First Aid.

### **Relationship With Early Childhood Intervention Programs or Outside Therapy Providers**

Rise welcomes collaboration with outside therapists. Our therapy team can be reached at [therapists@risedenver.org](mailto:therapists@risedenver.org). If parents are trying to schedule therapy time with outside providers at Rise, we ask that you schedule it either before school (prior to 8am); during nap time, if your child does not sleep; or after school (2:30pm), in an effort to minimize disruption to the schedule and class, and prevent overlapping services. Please collaborate with your child's teacher to schedule accordingly. All outside providers are required to complete an agreement and release of liability prior to offering services at Rise. Please contact the office to obtain these forms. In some cases, Rise will allow for children under the age of three, who are still receiving early intervention services to miss a school day, in order to receive their EI services at home. In this scenario, families are still responsible for tuition on that day, as we are unable to fill a one-day slot for another student.

### **Transition to Next Classroom**

The Rise School of Denver's school year begins in mid- to late August. Prior to that time (usually in the Spring), decisions will be made about the most developmentally appropriate classroom for each child for the upcoming school year. During the last month of school, children will visit their new classroom and spend time with their next teacher to prepare them for the transition.

### **Transition From Rise to Other School Settings**

A graduation ceremony and reception is held at the end of the school year for students graduating to an elementary school setting. Graduating students may attend Rise through the July/August break. The Rise staff will facilitate transition to the next school setting by offering the following services:

- Provision of information regarding public school programs
- Provision of records and assessments to the school
- Parent education meetings as needed
- Observing the child's next school environment
- Meeting with staff at the new school
- Encouraging staff at the school to observe the child at Rise
- Attending evaluation and IEP meetings as needed
- Providing resources to parents about the laws and regulations governing Special Education.

### **Visitors to The Center**

All visitors must check in at the office upon arrival. Visitors will include their name, the date, the time, and purpose of the visit. The staff will immediately alert the Director if an unknown person is present in the center. Unknown authorized caregivers will be asked to provide identification at the door before being allowed to enter the building.

### **Procedure For Filing A Complaint About Child Care**

The Rise School is a child-care program that is licensed by the Colorado Department of Human Services. The license indicates that the program has met the required standards for the operation

of a child-care facility. The license is posted outside the office door.

Most facilities make every effort to provide a safe and healthy environment for children. Unfortunately, on rare occasions, an incident of physical or sexual abuse may occur. If you believe your child has been abused, you should seek immediate assistance from your county department of social services. The telephone number to report child abuse for the City and County of Denver is *(720) 944-3000*.

Child care services play an important role in supporting families, and strong families are the basis of a thriving community. Your child's educational, physical, emotional and social development will be nurtured in a well-planned and well-run program. Remember to observe the program regularly, especially with regard to children's health and safety, equipment and play materials and staff. For additional information regarding licensing or if you have concerns about the child-care facility, consult with the Colorado Office of Child-Care Services at *(303) 866-5948*.

### **The Policy Regarding The Reporting Of Child Abuse**

All staff members at the Rise School have completed an intensive background check. Backgrounds are checked through the Central Registry of Child Protection and the Central Bureau of Investigation. Also, in accordance with the State of Colorado, the Rise School requires that all staff members report all cases of suspected abuse or neglect to the State Department of Social Services.

### **Odds and Ends**

- If families have a change in address, telephone number, employment, emergency numbers, or family situation, that information should be provided promptly to the child's teacher and the Director.
- Due to strict confidentiality policies, Rise staff cannot share personal or health information about the other children in your child's class or other children in the school.
- Babysitting for Rise families is permitted on a limited basis, subject to the execution, in

advance, by the employee and a student's parent or legal guardian of the "Rise School Babysitting Policy Employee/Parent Agreement," a copy of which may be obtained upon request from the Director.

- Staff members are unable to transport your child unless permission is designated for a school approved fieldtrip.

### **Parent Input, Suggestions and Concerns**

Parent input and feedback is always welcome. Every effort is made to accommodate parent requests. An anonymous parent survey will be sent to all parents annually, asking them to evaluate the program and make suggestions. Parents with suggestions or concerns are encouraged to discuss those concerns with their child's teacher first. If the teacher and parent are unable to reach a resolution, parents are encouraged to consult the director.