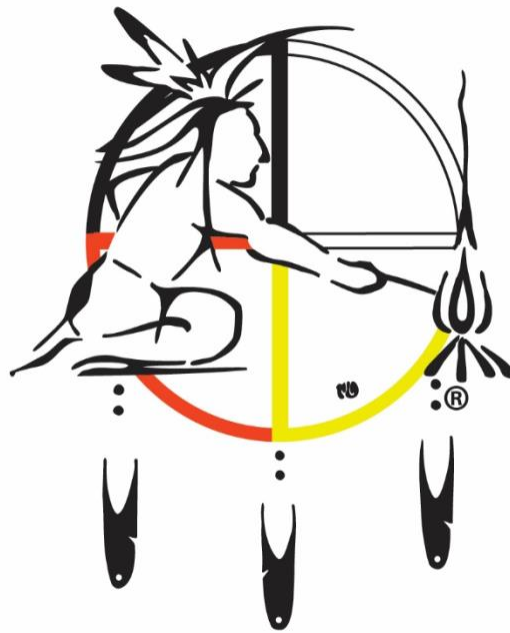


Forest County Potawatomi
Community
Gte-Ga-Nes Preschool
Parent Handbook



Academic Year 2017/2018

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Dear Parent or Guardian,

Bozho! Welcome to the Gte-Ga-Nes family! We are happy to have you and your child in the program and look forward to a positive experience with you and your little one.

Our program is a comprehensive program designed to serve families with preschool aged children. Gte-Ga-Nes provides opportunities for children and parents to grow, discover, and achieve skills which will benefit them and their families throughout life.

We believe that you, the parents/guardians, are the primary educators of your children. Therefore, our program provides an environment where you can participate in learning with your child, about yourselves and your community.

Your child's preschool years are a time of rapid learning as well as emotional and physical development. During this time, your child will be learning many of the skills he or she will need in Kindergarten, as well as skills he or she will use into adulthood, and together we will strive for regular attendance so that we can ensure this for your child. Gte-Ga-Nes brings together resources that add to a child's total development. Health, Nutrition, Education, Social/Emotional Wellness, Family Assistance, Special Needs and Parent Involvement opportunities are provided to children and their families.

Please remember that you are always welcome to come and visit the classrooms at any time!

We look forward to working with you and your family!

Bama mine gge-wabmen,
(See you later)
Gte-Ga-Nes Staff

Gte-Ga-Nes Staff

Preschool Main Office		478-7359
Education/Cultural Division Director	Thomas Boelter	478-7386
Assistant Division Director	Sarah Thomaschefsky	478-4167
Gte-Ga-Nes Director	Trisha Stefonek	478-7350
<u>Ge No Classroom</u>		478-4136
Lead Teacher	Cindy Chitko	
Assistant Teacher	Therese Harris	
Assistant Teacher	Carin Monnot	
<u>Mko Classroom</u>		478-4137
Lead Teacher	Kerry Kerner	
Assistant Teacher	Katie Collins	
Assistant Teacher	Eileen Gobert	
<u>Me We Classroom</u>		478-4138
Lead Teacher	Beth Wandsnider	
Asst. Lead Teacher	Mary Phalen	
Assistant Teacher	Abbey Albrecht	
Behavioral Specialist	Rebecca Jennings	478-4174
Speech Therapist	Kathryn Rogers	478-4181
Occupational Therapist	Tina Sonkowsky	478-4387
Bus Driver/Maintenance Supervisor	Mike Konaha	478-7347
Bus Driver/Food Service Manager/ Lead Staff	Peggy Konaha	478-7347
Kitchen	Danielle Shepard	478-4135

Gte-Ga-Nes Philosophy

Gte-Ga-Nes is a family focused program. *The family is viewed as the most important influence in a child's life.*

We accept and respect the varied make-up of families in our society today, their individual differences, their strengths, their struggles and their unique and special needs. By promoting independence, self-worth, social competency, and family pride in young children and their families we empower them in self-sufficiency and work toward building a better place in which we all can live.

Staff commitment and enthusiasm is vital to a quality program. We are dedicated to meeting the demands of a high quality program by offering opportunities for continued training and education for all staff.

Parent commitment and enthusiasm is equally as vital, and affects the quality of learning the child receives from the program. Without regular attendance and/or similar at-home learning, and parental communication and involvement, a child cannot reach his or her potential for learning and may enter Kindergarten unprepared.

Community outreach, coordination, and support are essential to the success of our program. We take pride in our program - the community gives to us – we in turn give back to the community. Therefore to reach our program goals we must remain accessible to the community in which we live. We will all be richer for it.

Gte-Ga-Nes (Little Garden)

Daily Class Schedule

8:30 am School Day Begins

Daily Activities *(not necessarily in the following order):*

Breakfast (9 am)

Circle Time *(Talking, Planning, Skill Learning)*

Story Time

Learning Stations Free Play

Large Group Learning Time *(Math/Science/Literacy)*

Project Time

Lunch (11:30 am)

Language & Culture

Rest & Reset Time *(Quiet, restful individual activity time)*

Large Motor/Outdoor Play

Clean-up, Prepare for Dismissal

1:00 pm Dismissal



Attendance

Regular attendance is *so* important so that children won't miss any learning in class, and so that they will learn that it is their responsibility to take going to school seriously. Poor attendance puts a child behind and at high risk of not being prepared academically and/or emotionally for the demands of Kindergarten. In addition, inconsistent attendance negatively affects a child's academic progress, as well as his or her anxiety levels & self-esteem. *Help boost your little one toward a successful, happy life!*

If you know ahead of time that your child must miss a day, please call the center at 478-7359 or send a written excuse with the bus drivers. If you do not contact us ahead of time, please call or send a note the day after your child is absent. It is important to let us know the reason for the absence so we can write down an excused report for your child.

If your child is absent from the center for more than three (3) consecutive days, or has a pattern of irregular attendance, our staff will contact you. Together we can discuss and develop a solution to the problem.

Those First Days in School

You may notice some temporary changes in your child's behavior at home for a short time after he or she begins school. You may notice increased fatigue, aggression, lapses in toilet training, or more dependency on you than usual.

These are natural reactions by your child to a new experience. More rest and lots of your attention will help him or her through this period of adjustment.

Class Hours

During the regular school year, classes at the Gte-Ga-Nes Center are held Monday through Friday from 8:30 a.m. to 1:00 p.m. *You may bring your child in at 8:20 a.m. Please do not bring your child in sooner, as staff is not always available to supervise your child.*

Open Door Policy

Gte-Ga-Nes has an Open Door Policy. Please feel free to visit the program at any time. All parents/guardians have the right to all information in their child's file. Please let us know ahead of time so that the file is available for you. You may view the file with a staff person and have copies made for you.

Parents are encouraged to share their concerns, suggestions or complaints. If the teacher is unable to address your concerns, our Director will investigate any complaints or non-compliance.

Confidentiality Statement

All forms/information on the children are considered confidential and are seen only by the appropriate Gte-Ga-Nes staff or the State Licensing Representative. Records are kept in an individual folder inside a locked file cabinet and no other person shall have access unless you give your written permission.

Preschool Enrollment

Admission/Enrollment Policy

Persons interested in enrolling a child in Gte-Ga-Nes begin by talking with the Family Assistance Coordinator who will assist with filling out the required paperwork. Paperwork and required examinations must be completed before the child can attend class at the center. Parents or a family representative should attend open house at the beginning of the school year. If no one is able to attend the open house for a child, or if the child starts after the beginning of the school year, a home visit or parent conference is conducted so that the required information can be passed along to the family.

Age Guidelines:

Children must be at least three (3) years old before September 1st of the current school year in order to attend.

Health Requirements include:

1. Physical examinations: Prior to start of classes (unless special arrangements are made with staff), and renewed every two years.
2. Immunizations must be current, and updated if needed.

Policy for Discharging Children

Care will no longer be provided for a particular child in the following instances:

1. A child cannot accept classroom structure, separation from the parent, or injures himself/herself or those around him/her.
 - A. Every effort must be made by the classroom staff to help the child adjust to the classroom environment. The classroom staff will document the child's behavior and use acceptable early childhood methods to assist the child in being able to manage self-discipline. Approved methods for assisting the child toward acceptable behavior may include:
 1. Time away from a given activity
 2. Give the child a legitimate exercise in which they may use up the excessive energy
 3. Removal from the group or from another student who may be contributing to the child's unacceptable behavior
 - B. If the problem continues, the teacher will contact the parent to explain the child's actions and what has been done to assist the child. This meeting will be to get suggestions on how to help the child accept the classroom structure and how to manage the child's inappropriate behavior. The parent may wish to observe in the classroom and assist the classroom staff in managing the behavior of the child.
 - C. If problems continue to occur, a meeting will be set up with the parents, teacher, and director. During this meeting it may be determined that the child should be removed from the program with the option of returning at a later date or when school resumes in the next school year.

Education

At the Gte-Ga-Nes center a variety of activities, both indoor and outdoor, are provided for children to express their feelings, develop new skills, increase their self-confidence, and explore ways of getting along with others. Teaching staff and volunteers strive to enhance each child's development by reinforcing play through describing what they observe, asking open-ended questions and then encouraging children to take the next step. Encouraging children to be creative, to learn through trial and error, and to benefit from mistakes is what our education component is about.

We follow the Wisconsin Early Learning Standards to help prepare the children for when they enter Kindergarten. Please feel free to come and talk to the teachers or assistant

teachers at any time if you have any questions about the education component of the preschool program.

Personal Items Liability

Children should not bring toys, food or money from home with them to Gte Ga Nes. If they bring personal items other than essential clothing or school supplies on the bus or to the preschool, Gte Ga Nes staff is not responsible for lost, broken or stolen items. The children take part in a well-planned day at the center. Everything they need is provided for them, including well-balanced meals. *Gte-Ga-Nes is not responsible for lost toys/money/other valuable items that a student brings to the center.*

Clothing

Clothing needs to be comfortable and easy to care for. Your child needs to feel free to play and work without fear of soiling or spoiling his or her clothes. Because the children sometimes go to the restrooms by themselves, please dress your child in something that is easy to pull down and up.

Please be sure to dress your child according to the weather. Remember to send a sweater and jacket or coat (with their name inside), mittens and hat, etc. when there is, or is possibility of, cold weather. *The bus drivers will be required to send your child back in for warmer clothing if he or she is not dressed for the weather.* Please dress your child warm enough to go outside for part of each day, weather permitting.

Please don't send a note for your child to stay inside during playground time. If the child is too sick to play outside, he or she should be at home.

Parent/Teacher Conferences

Your child's teacher will schedule at least two parent/teacher conferences with you over the school year to discuss your child's progress and to recommend teaching aids that you can use with your child at home.

Please don't ever feel that you need to wait until a parent/teacher conference is scheduled to talk to your child's teacher about your child. Feel free to come to the center and discuss your child's progress at any time. Also, be sure to check the monthly newsletter and the at-home activities we recommend that you do with your child. The interest you show in your child's activities at school, and the time you spend with your child at home doing these activities, will positively affect your child's school success.

Birthdays

Family members are welcome to celebrate their child's birthday or other family traditions in the center. Feel free to bring treats if you wish!

Special Needs

The intent of the Special Education portion of our program is to:

- A. Serve the children with special needs in an integrated setting or mainstream environment with other children
- B. Provide for the special needs of the child
- C. Work closely with other agencies and organizations serving children with special needs in order to identify these children and provide the full range of services necessary to meet the child's developmental needs

Child Guidance Policy

It is the policy of Gte-Ga-Nes to provide guidance and, when necessary, discipline for children. This guidance and discipline will be approached in a positive manner. The goal of the program is to help children develop self-control, self-esteem, and respect for the rights of others.

Only a child care worker meeting the qualifications of a child care teacher or assistant teacher shall provide guidance/discipline for children. Discipline shall not be delegated to other children. Time out and Redirection are the most frequently used child guidance techniques. Time out is used to separate a child from a problem situation, usually by having him/her sit on a chair away from other children and activities. Time out should be no longer than one minute per year of age of the child. Maximum time allowed for time out is five minutes. Redirection involves guiding the child into a different activity when he/she is having a problem or conflict.

Actions which are humiliating or frightening to a child are prohibited.

These include:

Spanking, hitting, pinching, shaking or inflicting any other form of corporal punishment
Verbal abuse, threats or derogatory remarks about the child or the child's family

Binding or tying to restrict movement or enclosing in a confined space such as a closet, locked room, box or similar cubicle
Withholding or forcing meals, snacks or naps
Children may not be punished for lapses in toilet training

Note to parents: The above described actions are prohibited and will not be used at Gte-Ga-Nes even at a parent's request.

Incidents of Aggression/Acting Out/Injury/Other:

Any time that your child is involved in any incident at Gte-Ga-Nes the parents will be notified immediately. *According to State regulations we are not allowed to give out the names of any other children involved.*

We understand that there will be times when a child will become distraught or won't quit crying. Our first action in these situations will be an attempt to determine the cause of the distress. It may be related to a basic need such as hunger or comfort, or emotional distress related to an event in the child's life or illness. We will stay calm and will do whatever we can to soothe your child. However, there are also times when we need your advice or assistance, and we won't hesitate to call you if we feel that it is necessary.

Health

It is very important for you to carefully check your child's health each day before he or she leaves home to go to the center. *State regulations will not allow any child who has a temperature above 100 degrees, or an infectious disease, to remain at the center.* The following guidelines will help you decide if your child should come to school. Children may not attend school if any of the following conditions exist:

- A. Sore throat
- B. Deep, hacking cough or severe congestion
- C. Earache
- D. Drainage from wounds, nose, eyes, ears.
- E. Diarrhea (twice the child's usual frequency of bowel movements with a loose consistency within a period of 24 hours)
- F. Two or more episodes of vomiting within 24 hours
- G. Itching of body or scalp
- H. Blood or pus from ear, skin, urine or stool
- I. Unusual behavior for the child characterized by no playing, confusion or persistent inconsolable crying
- J. Symptoms which indicate any communicable diseases such as:
 1. Chicken pox
 2. Impetigo

3. Lice
 4. Scabies
 5. Strep Throat
 6. Ringworm
- K. Reportable communicable disease

Persons working/volunteering at the center should also adhere to these guidelines.

A note from a health care provider that your child is no longer contagious is needed before your child is able to return to school.

Nutrition

At Gte-Ga-Nes we serve the children breakfast and a hot lunch. Our menus are approved by the Tribal Nutritionist. The children are always encouraged to help set the table. Staff members sit and eat with the children, as the meal is served family style. Meal time is a social time. We encourage children to talk and enjoy their meal times. Our program provides two-thirds of the children's daily nutritional needs.

Mental Health

Mental health in its simplest form is the capacity to love, work and play, without interference by emotional distress or unbalanced mental health. A mental health provider is available to observe and assess children who may be having difficulties, if necessary. The provider can also be available for consultation with staff and family as needed, and may be called upon by preschool staff if there are any concerns of emotional distress or lack of mental health wellness.

Administering Medication

If any medication is to be administered to your child during school hours, you must send an "Authorization for Giving Medicine" form along with the medication(s).

The original prescription container must be clean and have the child's name, date, medication dosage, name of drug, and hospital, clinic or doctor's name on it. The parent/guardian's signature and the date must be on the bottom of the permission slip. All medication will be kept in a locked box out of children's reach and refrigerated when necessary. If you send medicine to school with your child, we must have this information. The teacher will not give medicine without written permission. The

authorization form will be in the child's individual record and noted in the classroom medical log. Remember, if your child is sick, keep him or her at home.

Isolation Due to Illness Policy

If a child is sent to school ill, or becomes ill at school, they will be kept away from other children and monitored. The Health and Wellness Center may also be called, for guidance and/or if it appears the child needs medical assessment. If it is determined that the child should go home, staff will contact a parent or guardian. If this person cannot be reached, the parent's emergency person will be called to come and get the child.

Parent/Guardian Involvement

An essential part of our program is the involvement of parents. We believe that parents and guardians are the most important influence in their child's development. We believe that your child's education has been going on since birth and continues with each day. We are pleased that you have allowed us to become a part of your child's early learning and we hope that this handbook will alert you to the guidelines of the program and that you will gain an understanding of how it functions with the best interest of your child in mind.

Parent/Guardian Committee

All parents of Gte-Ga-Nes children are members of the Gte-Ga-Nes Parent Committee. Parent meetings are held once per month during the school year. All parents are invited and encouraged to attend each of these meetings. The majority of the parent meetings are meetings with the parents and their preschool child.

Family Assistance

The purpose of the Family Assistance Coordinator is to provide Gte-Ga-Nes families with any assistance necessary to help them to connect to available community resources. The Coordinator is available for: recruitment and enrollment, family partnership agreements, coordination of social service referrals and follow-up, home visits, advocacy/support and emergency assistance. Our program furnishes information through handouts, notes, newsletters and parent meetings as well as person to person contacts.

Grievance Procedure

- Step 1: The parent will discuss their complaint with the child's teacher. If not resolved, proceed to Step 2.
- Step 2: The parent will discuss the complaint with the Director. If not resolved, proceed to Step 3.
- Step 3: The parent will, in writing, contact individuals in the following order:
- A. Director, asking for further resolution
 - B. If not resolved by Director, contact the Education/Cultural Preservation Division Director
 - C. If not resolved by Division Director, contact the Tribal Administrator

NOTE: All written grievances will be kept on file in the Director's office.

Mandated Reporting

All staff members are mandated to report any form of suspected child abuse or neglect, no matter where it occurred. This is in accordance with Wisconsin State law, as well as Early Childhood Education ethical requirements.

Inclement Weather

Gte-Ga-Nes will not hold classes on days the Tribal Center is closed for inclement weather. Also, the Gte-Ga-Nes Preschool will primarily follow the Crandon school district in regard to running buses or closing of school, given that we are located in Crandon.

- A. If the Crandon district is not running buses, but is open, then the Preschool will also be open and will not run the buses
- B. If the Crandon district is closed, then the Gte-Ga-Nes Preschool will also be closed to students
- C. If the Crandon district has delayed the school day start time, Gte-Ga-Nes will be open if we can send the buses out by 10:00 am or sooner (if this occurs, we may notify parents that students can stay past 1:00 pm or be picked up);

if delayed past 10:00 am bus run start time, Gte-Ga-Nes will be closed to students

- D. If the Wabeno district is not running buses and/or is closed, but Crandon is open, then the Wabeno/Carter Bus run will not be running, but Gte-Ga-Nes will be open
- E. If the Wabeno district has delayed the school day start time later than 10:00 am, but Crandon has not, Gte-Ga-Nes Wabeno/Carter Bus run will not run

If the bus does not run, you may bring your child in if you think the conditions are safe. *If the children are already at the center and travel/weather conditions are becoming poor, they may be brought home from school early.*

Confusing, we know! **If for any reason you are unsure whether or not classes will be held, please feel free to call the center at 478-7359 or 478-7350.**

Transportation

The Gte-Ga-Nes program will provide transportation for the children who attend, if the children live within the designated service area. The designated service area is limited by State and IHS regulations pertaining to how long children of specific ages can be on the bus. For example, if a child lives 20 miles out from the Crandon route, and transporting the child would bring us outside of the maximum time the other children can be riding for, we unfortunately cannot modify the route to go that far out of the area.

If there is any emergency change in the place your child will be picked up, please call or stop into the center by 8:00 a.m.

If there is any emergency change in the place your child is to be dropped off, please call or stop into the center by 12:30 p.m. (these places can only be those designated on your signed pick-up/drop off form.)

For long term change in pick up or drop off, you **MUST** come into the Gte-Ga-Nes Office to complete a new pick up/drop off form.

If you are not home when your child is dropped off and your emergency drop-off person is not home, your child will be returned to the center. If we cannot locate a drop-off person in a reasonable amount of time, your child will be taken to Indian Child Welfare or Forest County Social Services. We do not want this to happen. Therefore, the more individuals you have on your drop-off slip, the better. If this happens once, a letter will be sent to the parent/guardian. If this happens more than once, we may have to consider withdrawing the child from Gte-Ga-Nes for a period of time. Be sure you have

made arrangements for your child when he/she is dropped off after school if you will not be home. If an emergency arises, please contact the center as soon as possible.

Parent/Guardian Transporting

When transporting your own child to the center, make sure that you arrive at the center no more than 10 minutes before the center opens at 9:00 a.m. Bring your child into the classroom and sign in. *Children should not be dropped off by themselves in the parking lot.*

If you are picking up your child after school, you must be there *no later than 10 minutes after class has ended.* You must come into the classroom and sign out your child, as we do not allow children to leave the building on their own.

Being Ready for the Bus

1. Ask your child to go to the bathroom before the bus arrives.
2. Have your child dressed & ready to put his/her coat on. If your child is going to wear a snowsuit, have the bottom of the snowsuit on. Have hat, gloves and boots ready by the door, to pop on when the bus arrives.
3. *The Gte-Ga-Nes bus can wait only two (2) minutes* for each child, due to long bus runs. Please remember that if your child misses the bus, it is not possible for the bus to come back and pick up your child, but you may bring your child in to school.
4. Please use the "NO Gte-Ga-Nes" sign so the bus driver will know your child is not going to school that day.
5. Please remember that if your child has been absent from school to please call the bus to let them know when your child is ready to return to school.

Bus Rules

1. Parents should notify the center or main office when a child will not be attending class and why, so that the center knows not to go and pick up the child.
2. Parents should notify the center a week in advance of moving.
3. The child must cross in front of the bus.
4. Only Gte-Ga-Nes children, volunteers and volunteer's children will ride the bus to and from the center.
5. There is no eating, drinking or smoking on the bus.
6. There will be two (2) adults on the bus at all times.
7. All bus passengers wear seat belts.

8. Someone 12 years or older should let the bus driver know they are home to receive the child.

Outdoor Activities

The children will go outside to play every day, unless the weather is extremely poor. Please be sure to send appropriate clothes for the children e.g. boots, snow pants, mittens and hats in the winter.

Please do not send your child to school if they are not able to go outside and play. We are not always staffed enough for a staff to have to stay inside.

Lice Policy

1. All children will be checked for lice at Gte-Ga-Nes twice per month. If a child is absent on that day he/she will be checked when returning to school. Also, if a child is obviously and consistently scratching, a check will be done on that child that day. These checks will be done by staff from the Health and Wellness or a trained staff member.
2. If the child is checked by a staff member and lice is suspected, it will be requested that a Health and Wellness Center Health Care Professional come to the preschool and check the child.
3. When dead or live lice or nits are seen in the child's hair, the parent/guardian will be notified and he/she will be kept in the classroom and can leave at the end of the day as scheduled. He/she should not return until appropriately treated— this can be done by getting a complete, all-natural lice treatment kit from Health & Wellness, and bringing them in to Heath & Wellness the next day to be checked.
4. Written confirmation, signed by a Health Care Professional, that the child is free from nits or lice must accompany the child when he/she returns to school.
5. If the child gets nits or lice a second time, before the next head check, it indicates that either treatment resistant lice is occurring or the treatment needs to be redone more thoroughly for both the child and the environment.