
Family Model Handbook Instructions

Home-Based

CCA For Social Good™ (“CCA”) has developed this material as a model for your program’s Family Handbook. This handbook contains many of the most important policies your program needs to address. **It will require your review and revision in order to reflect your program’s policies, procedures and culture, and to comply with applicable federal, state, and local law.**

NOTICE

The content of this model handbook is not all-inclusive. It is provided to help you get a jumpstart on creating a Family Handbook specifically for your program. Items marked in red vary widely and should be reviewed carefully prior to adoption.

You should modify or withdraw policies and procedures within this handbook in accordance with your program’s policies, goals, and objectives.

After you create your program’s Family Handbook be sure to have it reviewed by qualified employment law counsel to make sure it is in compliance with applicable federal, state, and local law. That review by your counsel should be updated from time to time. CCA may update this model family handbook from time to time, but is not obligated to do so.

This model handbook was prepared by, and is the property of, CCA. CCA is the creator of the material contained herein, and it is protected under federal and state intellectual property law. CCA provides the handbook to CCA’s licensees. The use of the handbook is subject to the terms of the user’s license with CCA. The right to use the handbook terminates upon termination of the user’s license with CCA. CCA hereby grants the right to use the handbook to authorized licensees of CCA’s licensee, subject to the same conditions. This model handbook was last reviewed May, 2020.

PREPARING THIS HANDBOOK FOR DISTRIBUTION

- **Save a copy** of this handbook onto your computer.
- **This entire handbook is editable and you should review every sentence to make sure you are in agreement.** Red sections indicate areas where you should pay particular attention as you will typically be required to make choices and/or input information. **Red text indicates nationally recognized policy that you may keep, modify or delete. Red text may also indicate descriptive prompts for your program's specific content. Modify red sections** to reflect your program's specific rules and procedures by simply clicking on the text. Be sure to and change the font color to black after revising the text. (Highlight the **red text**, right click the mouse button once, choose **Font**, make **Font Style = Regular** and **Font Color = Black** and click **OK**.)
- Text between **[brackets]** are prompts for your program's specific information; simply click and type the revised content.
- **SAVE your work** frequently. (Click on **File** and then **Save As**. It's helpful to add the date and your initials to the saved file.)
- **Customize the handbook** by adding your program's name. If you follow the instructions below, the words "Early Childhood Education Program" which appear in green throughout the document will automatically be replaced with your program's name all at one time.

For Microsoft Word 2010:

- Go to the Title page, click on the Title
- Under the **Home** ribbon, select **Replace**
 - In the Replace screen, enter the following:
 - Under **Find What**, type (case sensitive): **Early Childhood Education Program**
 - Under **Replace With**, type (without the brackets): [the name of your Program]
 - Click **Replace All**. A pop-up screen will appear stating you have replaced the text.
 - Click on **OK**. Click on **Close** in the *Replace* window.

For Microsoft Word 2007 and older:

- Go to the Title Page, click on the Title.
- On the Menu Bar, click **Edit**.
- From the drop down, choose **Replace**.
- In the Replace screen, enter the following:
 - Under **Find What**, type (case sensitive): **Early Childhood Education Program**
 - Under **Replace With**, type (without the brackets): [the name of your Program]
 - Click **Replace All**. A pop-up screen will appear stating you have replaced the text.
 - Click on **OK**. Click on **Close** in the *Replace* window.
- You may **add your logo** to the Title Page of the handbook.
 - Go to the Title Page.
 - To add, click on [Click here to insert your Program's Logo here or delete].
 - Click on **Insert** on the Menu Bar.
 - From the drop down, choose **Picture**.
 - From the picture drop down, choose **From File**.
 - Locate your logo on your computer and click **Insert**. Your logo will appear on the page.

If you do not want to add a logo.

- Go to the Title Page of the handbook.
- Click on [Click here to insert your Program's Logo here or delete].
- Click the right mouse button once.
- Choose **Cut**.
- **Modify the "Welcome" page** with your personalized welcome letter to the family, your program's name and your name.
- **Add your signature.**
- **Delete procedures** you do not wish to include in your handbook.
- **Delete** the instructions pages.
- **Add other procedures** you may have established that are not covered within these pages.
- Update the Table of Contents after any revisions are made to the document.
 - To update, click the right mouse button once anywhere within the body of the Table of Contents, select **Update field**, select **Update entire table**, and click on **OK**. Your table

now reflects the changes you've made to your document and automatically puts in the correct page numbers.

- **Update the font colors** throughout the handbook.
 - Go to the Title Page, click on the Title click on **Edit** on your menu bar, **Select All**.
 - Click on **Format** on your menu bar, select **Font**.
 - Under **Font Color**, choose **Black**.
- Review the completed handbook with an attorney in your state to ensure all the state, federal, and local laws have been considered.

[Click here to insert your Program's Logo here or delete]

Early Childhood Education Program FAMILY HANDBOOK

[Click here and enter 'Year' to 'Year'] School Year

[Insert Center Name and/or Logo]

WELCOME

Dear Family,

[Click here to enter a warm welcome letter to families and caregivers]

(Enter a warm welcome letter to families and caregivers. Express your goals and plans for the year. Include your mission if you wish. Communicate information that will put families at ease; including a summary of information about the safety, warmth and care of the environment in your program. Explain the purpose of the handbook and encourage families to ask questions if they are unsure or don't understand.)

Thank you for choosing **Early Childhood Education Program**. I look forward to providing your child with a caring and enriching environment.

Sincerely,

[Click here to insert your name]

[Click here to insert your contact information]

Early Childhood Education Program

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ABOUT ME

Philosophy

[Click here to enter your program's goals and philosophy]

Consider making a statement about cognitive, physical, social and emotional development. This section should answer the questions: Why does your program exist? What guides your thinking in the curricula you develop and the decisions you make?

Mission

[Click here to enter your program's mission]

Explain what you strive to achieve in your program.

Certification

[Click here to insert the type of license your program has]

[Click here to insert your program's accreditations]

[Click here to insert Quality Rating Score or delete]

Definition of Family

In this handbook when I use the term family, I am referring to a parent, legal guardian, sponsor or anyone else who provides for the well-being, best-interest and responsibility of your child in my care.

Hours of Operation

Child care services are provided from [click here to enter opening time] AM to [click here to enter closing time] PM [click here to enter first day of week] through [click here to enter last day of week].

[Click here to insert any variations such as a different summer schedule]

Evening & Night Care

With advanced notice, I do provide care between the hours of

[click here to enter beginning overnight hours] PM to

[click here to enter ending overnight hours] AM. Children in care during the night time follow a schedule designed to replicate activities typical of your child's routine at home. I have an evening and morning schedule of activities planned for the hours when children are awake. Children who attend partially through the evening hours have the opportunity to sleep as needed. Children are served the evening meal if present at that time. A night-time snack is available, and breakfast is served to all children in care for the night unless the parent specifies otherwise.

Emergency Substitute Provider

In the rare case of an emergency situation, I will call my emergency substitute provider (see list of names posted on the bulletin board). S/he will come to the facility to stay with the children during my absence. In the event that I cannot secure a qualified substitute during an emergency, you or your emergency contact will be asked to make arrangements to pick up your child (ren) and the program will close for the remainder of the day. Should this need arise, you

or your emergency contact shall pick up their children within **[click here to insert the maximum wait time for pickup]** of receiving the call.

I will provide my emergency substitute provider with a brief orientation that will include the names and ages of children present, arrival and departure information for each child including the names of people authorized to pick up your child, the location of the children's files including emergency contact information, consent for emergency medical treatment and any special health care needs. The emergency substitute provider will have appropriate credentials and clearances. Names of approved substitutes will be provided to you and a list will be posted on the bulletin board.

Holidays

I am closed for certain holidays: **[click here to insert the holidays your program is closed]**

There will be early closings on **[click here to insert early closing days]**

Admission & Enrollment

All admission and enrollment forms must be completed and enrollment fee and first tuition payment paid prior to your child's first day of attendance.

An enrollment fee of \$**[click here to enter enrollment fee]** is due at the time of enrollment. This fee is non-refundable.

Based on the availability and openings, my program admits children from **[click here to enter minimum age]** to **[click here to enter maximum age]** years of age.

My process for introducing children to my program is **[click here to insert your process for introducing new children]**.

Children are admitted without regard to race culture, sex, religion, national origin, or disability. I do not discriminate on the basis of special needs as long as a safe, supportive environment can be provided.

Waiting List

Children will be enrolled from the waiting list in the order from which they are listed. A family with a child already enrolled my program will be given priority.

Adjustment/Trial Period

My program is a fun and exciting place for children to experience and learn about their world and make new friends. But it does take time for a child to adjust to a new child care setting. I will try to make the adjustment easier by encouraging your children to discuss feelings, providing extra attention and support, participating in role-playing and reassuring them of their family's return.

A **[click here to enter number of weeks]** week adjustment period begins at your child's first day in my care. During this time, the family can decide to terminate the signed contract without penalty.

Inclusion

I believe that children of all ability levels are entitled to the same opportunities for participation, acceptance and belonging in child care. I will make every reasonable accommodation to

encourage full and active participation of all children in my program based on their individual capabilities and needs.

If your child has an identified special need,

[click to insert your policy relative to special needs; include required forms and completion date]

Non-Discrimination

Equal educational opportunities are available for all children, without regard to race, color, creed, national origin, gender, age, ethnicity, religion, disability, or parent/provider political beliefs, marital status, sexual orientation or special needs, or any other consideration made unlawful by federal, state or local laws. Educational programs are designed to meet the varying needs of all students.

Confidentiality

Unless I receive your written consent, information regarding your child will not be released with the exception of that required by regulatory and partnering agencies. All records concerning children at my program are confidential.

My Qualifications

I have **[click here and enter number of years experience]** years of experience in the child care industry and I **[click here and type 'meet' or 'exceed']** the state requirements and qualifications.

I participate in ongoing training in the areas of child growth and development, healthy and safe environments, developmentally appropriate practices, guidance, family relationships, cultural and individual diversity, and professionalism.

Staff / Assistant / Substitute Qualifications.

Any Staff, Assistants, or Substitutes that are employed by me will have appropriate qualifications in the child care industry and will **[click here and type 'meet' or 'exceed']** the state requirements. A list of qualified staff, assistants, and substitutes will be provided to you and available on the bulletin board.

Communication & Family Partnership

Daily Communications.

[A] Daily notes from me will be written in our Family-Teacher Journal to keep you informed about your child's activities and experiences in my program. The purpose of this Journal is to ensure regular two-way communication between your family and me. I encourage you to share events and information from home that will better enable me to understand your child and to help strengthen our partnership in the care of your child. The Family-Teacher Journal will be placed in your child's cubby at the end of each day. I encourage you to write your entry upon drop off or pick up and ask that you do not take the journal home.

or

[B] Daily notes from me will keep you informed about your child's activities and experiences in my program. Notes will be placed in your child's cubby at the end of each day.

Bulletin Boards. I have a bulletin board with program news, upcoming events, holiday closing dates, announcements, etc.

Email. I encourage you to provide an email address that you use regularly so that I may send you announcements, event invitations, newsletters and general updates.

Family Activities. Each family is a child's first teacher. I value families as partners in the growth and development of children in my care. I encourage parents and other family members to be involved in the program, visit your child(ren) in my classroom, participate in events, and provide feedback on the program. I encourage families to participate and support your child's learning goals.

Please see the list of Family Activities at the end of this booklet.

CURRICULA & LEARNING

Learning Environment

I provide a rich learning environment with curricula that are developmentally appropriate to the specific ages of the children in my care. I have a flexible day routine that allows children to advance at their own pace. I strongly believe that learning happens through play. Learning and exploring are hands-on and are facilitated through interest areas.

Outings & Field Trips

Weather permitting, I conduct supervised walking trips around the neighborhood. Children are accounted for at all times. A permission statement for participation in walking trips is included in the enrollment package.

From time to time, there will be supervised field trips, **and I encourage you to join your child on the trip.** *Permission Slips* for each trip must be signed by the child's family.

For field trips, please dress your child appropriately for the season. Walking shoes are a must. Sandals and flip-flops are not appropriate for walking and make it difficult for your child.

The safety of children will be guarded in all activities. Proper restraint systems (seat belts) and the correct use of them are critically important during travel to/from the child care program as well as during field trips.

Television Time

My normal daily routine does not include television watching, but from time-to-time, I may record a television show without advertisements as a teaching aid. Television consumption will not be longer than **[click here and enter maximum number of television time]** hour and the program will be screened prior to showing. Programs will consist of non-violent and high-quality educational material. My focus is to provide your child a positive experience with increased understanding of the world. Alternative activities are available for children during television time.

Electronic Media

Electronic Media is limited to **[click here and enter maximum number of electronic media time]** minutes or less per day per child. Internet sites and software are pre-screened to contain non-violent and high-quality educational content. Alternative activities are available for children during this time.

Multiculturalism

Multiculturalism is vital for all children because it sets social goals and promotes respect for all people and the environment we inhabit. I utilize books, music, games, and a wide range of activities as aids to teach children respect for our world and the diversity of life upon it.

Celebrations

My celebrations and holiday policy encourages an enhanced understanding of and respect for different cultures and beliefs of children, families, staff and community.

[Click here to insert holiday/celebration practices]

Rest Time

Infants sleep according to their own schedule and are put to sleep on their backs.

After lunch, all children less than [click here to enter age] years of age participate in quiet rest time. Children are not required to sleep and may be given quiet activities.

[Click here to insert your policy for safe sleep equipment to reduce the risk of SIDS/ suffocation]

Toilet Training

The most important factor in making the toilet learning experience successful and as low-stress as possible is a home/child care partnership that supports your child. Research indicates that children cannot successfully learn how to use the toilet until they are physically, psychologically, and emotionally ready. Many pediatricians say that most children under 24 months of age are not physically capable of regulating bladder and bowel muscles. Most positive toilet training occurs only after children show signs of physical control or awareness of their bodily functions and when they demonstrate an interest or curiosity in the process. I am committed to working with you to make sure that toilet training is carried out in a manner that is consistent with your child's physical and emotional abilities and your family's concerns.

[Click here to insert your additional practices on toilet training]

GUIDANCE

General Procedure

Thoughtful direction and planning ahead are used to prevent problems and encourage appropriate behavior. Communicating consistent, clear rules and involving children in problem solving help children develop their ability to become self-disciplined. I encourage children to be fair, to be respectful of other people, of property, and to learn to understand the results of their actions.

Challenging Behavior

Children are guided to treat each other and adults with self-control and kindness. When a child becomes physically aggressive, I intervene immediately to protect all of the children.

My usual approach to helping children with challenging behaviors is to show them how to solve problems using appropriate interactions. When discipline is necessary, it is clear, consistent and understandable to the child.

Physical restraint is not used or permitted for discipline. There are rare instances when I need to ensure a child's safety or that of others and I may restrain a child by gently holding her or him only for as long as is necessary for control of the situation.

Notification of Behavioral Issues to Families

If a child's behavior/circumstance is of concern, communication will begin with your family as the first step to understanding your child's individual needs and challenges. We will work together to evaluate these needs in the context of my program.

On rare occasions, a child's behavior may warrant the need to find a more suitable setting for care. Examples of such instances include:

- A child appears to be a danger to others.
- Continued care could be harmful to, or not in the best interest of the child as determined by a medical, psychological, or social service personnel.
- Undue burden on my resources and finances for the child's accommodations for success and participation.

TUITION AND FEES

Important Notice

All payment and fee processing will be completed by **[Click here to enter name of person responsible for collecting fees or "our business office"]**. He/she will be in charge of collecting tuition and other fees and contacting families regarding payment issues. If you have a question or concern regarding a payment or fee, please contact **[Click here to enter name of person responsible for collecting fees or "our business office"]**.

Tuition Rates

Full-Time Rate (4-5 days): **[\$[Click here to enter dollar amount] per [Click here to enter "week", "two weeks" or "month"]**

Part-Time Rate (2-3 days): **[\$[Click here to enter dollar amount] per [Click here to enter "week", "two weeks" or "month"]**

Families contract for a specific weekly schedule as indicated on the Enrollment Agreement Form. Payment for this contracted schedule is required every week year-round whether or not your child attends; this enables us to pay teachers a stable salary every week all year. No credits are given for sick or vacation days, holidays, staff training closure or closure due to inclement weather.

Tuition Deposit

A Tuition Deposit equal to two weeks of care is required at the time registration is confirmed. This deposit is applied to the last two weeks of care provided a two-week written notice is given. If a two-week written notice is not given when a child has withdrawn from the program, the family will be billed for two weeks of care, which may come out of their deposit.

Overtime Rates or Adding Extra Days

Overtime rates apply only to part-time families and are contingent on prior agreement of hours or days of care needed. When your family surpasses **[Click here to enter number of hours]** hours of child care per week, a fee of \$**[Click here to enter dollar amount per hour]** will be charged to your account for each overtime hour of care.

Payment

Payment is always due in advance with no deduction for any absences, holidays, or closures due to inclement weather, power outages, or other situations beyond our control. Payment is due **[click here and enter 'weekly', 'bi-monthly' or 'monthly']** by **[click here to enter time]** AM on **[click here to enter due day for payment, i.e., every other Friday]**, as outlined in the *Enrollment Agreement*.

A non-refundable registration fee of **[click here to enter dollar amount]** is due annually on **[click here to enter date]** this fee **[click here and enter 'will' or 'will not']** be pro-rated.

Methods of Payment

Several methods of payment are available for families' convenience. Families can pay by cash, check, money order, automatic electronic funds transfer or credit card. To set up automatic, reoccurring payments, please contact **[Click here to enter name of person responsible for collecting fees or "our business office"]**.

Late Payment Charges

Late payments can pose serious problems for our programs **and as a result, the business does not have the latitude to allow families to accrue a balance equal to more than one week of tuition. Late payments will result in the imposition of late payment fees. Failure to pay child care payments will result in child care services being terminated.**

If payment is not received on the day that it is due, a late fee of \$**[click here to enter late fee amount]** will be added to your next tuition payment for each day that it is late. **Repeated late payments will result in your family being required to set up automatic payments or credit card payments.**

Any payments made will be applied to the oldest charges and late fees may still apply if the account is not paid in full by the next tuition due date.

If payment is more than **[click here to enter number of days]** business days past due, we may attempt to recover payment in small claims court and/or your account may be sent to a 3rd party collections agency. You will be responsible for all expenses associated with these actions including all court and attorney fees.

Returned Checks/Rejected Transaction Charges

All returned checks or rejected ACH (automatic debits) or credit card transactions will be charged a fee of

[\$**click here to enter the maximum dollar amount allowable by your state law**]. This charge may be collected electronically. Two or more returned checks or rejected transactions will result in your account being placed on “cash only” status.

Late Pick-up Fees

Late pick-up is not a normal program option and will only be considered as an exceptional occurrence. Late fees of \$**click here to enter dollar amount** per minute will be assessed beginning at **click here to enter time** PM and will be due upon arrival.

Repeated late pick up may result in child care services being terminated.

Other Fees

- *From time-to-time there will be additional fees associated with special activities or field trips. These fees are due prior to the event, activity or trip.*
- A non-refundable enrollment/ registration fee of \$**click here to enter dollar amount** is due annually on **click here to enter date**.

Credits & No Credits

- **Families contract for a specific weekly schedule** as completed on the *Enrollment Agreement* Form. Payment for this contracted schedule is required every week year-round whether or not your child attends; this enables us to pay teachers a stable salary every week all year. No credits are given for sick or vacation days, holidays, staff training closure or closure due to inclement weather, infectious disease (except as noted below) or public health emergency such as a pandemic, or weather-related or environmental emergencies.
- **In the event of any of the above circumstances** if we are prevented from operating, families shall pay **click here to enter % of tuition fee** for the next **click here to enter # of weeks**. Payment of your Tuition allows us to retain staff, pay operating expenses, and hold open your child’s spot for when we are safely able to reopen.
- **Credit may be given for Serious Illness/Injury** – In the unfortunate event of extenuating circumstances such as your child is hospitalized, absent due to a serious contagious disease or serious illness or injury, credit may be issued. A written doctor’s note is required to receive a credit.
- **Credit **click here and enter 'will' or 'will not'** be given for my absence** – there are [no] credits for days when I must close my program for personal reasons. There are 5 personal/sick days that are pre-considered in determining tuition and are [not] refundable.

ATTENDANCE & WITHDRAWAL

Absence

If your child is going to be absent or arrive after [\[click here to enter late arrival time\]](#) AM, please call me at [\[click here to insert phone number, e-mail address and/or other method of preferred contact\]](#). I will be concerned about your child if I do not hear from you.

My Vacation

My personal vacations consist of two full weeks a year. You will be notified well in advance of these dates. **[A] No tuition payments are due during these two weeks. [B] Full tuition is still due during these weeks.**

Families are responsible for finding back-up care for their children during holidays, provider vacations and planned or unplanned closings.

Withdrawals

A written notice, [\[click here to enter number of weeks\]](#) weeks in advance, is required by me when a child is being withdrawn. Failure to notify will result in forfeiture of your two-week deposit.

Closing Due to Extreme Weather

Should severe weather or other conditions (i.e., snow, storms, floods, tornadoes, hurricanes, earthquakes, blizzards, loss of power, loss of water) prevent me from opening on time or at all, notification to the families will be announced on [\[click here to insert e-mail, phone number, radio station, and/or television station\]](#) .

If it becomes necessary to close early, I will contact you or your emergency contacts as soon as possible. Your child's early pick-up is your responsibility to arrange.

DROP-OFF AND PICK-UP

General Procedure

I open at [\[click here to enter time\]](#) AM, and please do not drop-off your child prior any earlier than this time. Families are expected to accompany their children and sign them in.

I close at [\[click here to enter time\]](#) PM, and please do not pick-up your child later than this time. Families are expected to enter my home and sign-out their child out, and leave by closing time.

[\[Click here to insert drop-off and pick-up location, other procedures and instructions\]](#)

Use of Cell Phones

Drop-off and pick-up are my primary windows of time to communicate with you about your child, In addition, children need your full attention at this time. Therefore, I respectfully request that you not use cell phones while dropping off or picking up your child.

Authorized & Unauthorized Pick-up

Your child will only be released to you or those persons you have listed as Emergency and Release Contacts. If you want a person who is not identified as an Emergency and Release Contact to pick-up your child, you must notify me in advance, in writing. Your child will not be released without prior written authorization. The person picking up your child will be required to show a picture ID as verification. Please notify your pick-up person of my policy.

If your child has not been picked up after closing and I have not heard from you, attempts will be made to contact you, and the contacts listed as Emergency and Release Contacts. I will stay with your child as long as possible, **but if after [click here to enter number of hours] hours I have not been able to reach you or any person listed as an Emergency and Release Contact, I will call the local child protective services agency.**

Right to Refuse Child Release

I may refuse to release children if I have reasonable cause to suspect that any person picking up a child is under the influence of drugs or alcohol, or is physically or emotionally impaired in any way that may endanger your child. To protect your child, I may request that another adult listed as an Emergency and Release Contact pick-up your child or I may call the police to prevent potential harm to your child. Reoccurring situations may result in the release of your child from my program.

[Click here to insert any other policies you may have]

PERSONAL BELONGINGS

What to Bring

- **Infants:** enough clean bottles for a day's use, at least 6 diapers per day, and at least 2 changes of clothes per day.
- **Toddlers:** enough clean bottles for a day's use (if applicable), six diapers and at least two changes of clothes per day.
- **Older Toddlers:** at least two changes of clothes or more per day if going through the toilet training program. **[click here to insert any other requests for toilet training items]**
- **Preschoolers:** at least one change of clothes, socks and shoes.
- **Kindergarteners:** at least one change of clothes, socks and shoes.
- **After School Care Children:** books for homework.

Please label all items brought from home with your child's name (i.e., clothes, bottles, diapers, pacifiers, crib sheet, blanket, etc.) to prevent items from becoming misplaced or lost. I am not responsible for lost or damaged items. Sheets and soiled clothing will be sent home on an as-needed basis for laundering and return to the program.

Cubbies

Upon enrollment each child will be assigned a "cubby." Cubbies are labeled with your child's name **[click here and type 'and photo'; or delete]**. Please check your child's cubby on a daily basis for items that need to be taken home.

Lost & Found

You can look for lost items and bring found items to the Lost-and-found Box located **[click here and enter location]**. Please note that I am not responsible for lost personal property.

Toys from Home

I request that you do not allow your child to bring toys from home.

[Click here to insert any other policies you may have]

NUTRITION

Foods Brought from Home

[A] I request that you do not bring food from home into my program.

[B] Food brought from home is permitted under the following conditions:

- Foods should be labeled with your child's name, date, and type of food.
- Children will not be allowed to share food provided by the child's family unless the food is intended for sharing with all of the children.
- Leftover food will be discarded except for foods that do not require refrigeration and/or come in a commercially-wrapped package that was never opened.

Food Allergies

If your child has a food allergy, you must notify me in writing so that I can make appropriate substitutions. The written notification should list appropriate food substitutions and must be updated at least annually.

Food allergies can be life threatening and each child with a food allergy should have an action plan for emergency care completed by the family physician. A copy should be given to me prior to enrollment.

Meal Time

At meal time the table is set with **[click here and enter type of tableware, i.e., disposable or real] plates and flatware. Good table manners are modeled and encouraged. Weekly menus are posted for viewing by families.**

I am trained in first-aid for choking and am always present at all meals.

Infant Feedings

Infant feedings follow these procedures:

- Bottle-fed infants are fed while being held or sitting up.
- Infants are fed "on cue" to the extent possible (at least every 4 hours and usually not more than hourly) and by a consistent caregiver/teacher.
- Expressed breast milk may be brought from home if frozen or kept cold during transit. Fresh breast milk must be used within 48 hours. Previously frozen, thawed breast milk must be used within 24 hours. Bottles must be clearly labeled with your child's name and the date the milk was expressed. **Frozen breast milk must be dated and may be kept in the freezer for up to 3 months.**
- Formula must be brought in a factory-sealed container in a ready-to-feed strength or powder or concentrate. Formula brought from home must be labeled with your child's name.
- Solid foods will only be introduced after a consultation with the child's family.

Toddler Feedings

- Children are encouraged to self-feed to the extent that they have the skills. Children are encouraged, but not forced to eat a variety of foods.
- Round, firm foods that pose a choking hazard for children less than 4 years of age are not permitted. These foods include: hot dogs, whole grapes, peanuts, popcorn, thickly spread peanut butter and hard candy.

HEALTH

Immunizations

Immunizations are required according to the current schedule recommended by the U.S. Public Health Services and the American Academy of Pediatrics, www.aap.org. Every **[click here and enter Month]**, I check with the public health department or the American Academy of Pediatrics for updates of the recommended immunization schedule. If a child is not going to be immunized for medical or religious reasons, the parent will be asked to complete a form required by state regulations. Unimmunized children are excluded during outbreaks of vaccine preventable illness as directed by the state health department.

Physicals

Routine physicals are required according to the current recommendations of the American Academy of Pediatrics, www.aap.org. A copy of your child's physical should be received before but must be received no later than **[click here to enter number of weeks]** weeks after your child begins my program. Families are responsible for assuring that their child's physicals are kept up-to-date and that a copy of the results of the child's health assessment is given to me.

Illness

I understand that it is difficult for a family member to leave or miss work, but to protect other children, you may not bring a sick child to my program. I have the right to refuse a child who appears ill. You will be called and asked to retrieve your child if your child exhibits any of the following symptoms. This is not an all-inclusive list. I will try to keep your child comfortable but he/she will be excluded from all activities until you arrive.

- Illness that prevents your child from participating in activities.
- Illness that results in greater need for care than I can provide.
- Fever (above 100°F under the arm, above 101°F in the mouth, above 102°F in the ear) accompanied by other symptoms.
- Diarrhea – stools with blood or mucus, and/or uncontrolled, unformed stools that cannot be contained in a diaper/underwear or toilet.
- Vomiting – green or bloody, and/or 2 or more times during the previous 24 hours.
- Mouth sores caused by drooling.
- Rash with fever, unless a physician has determined it is not a communicable disease.
- Pink or red conjunctiva with white or yellow eye discharge, until on antibiotics for 24 hours.
- Impetigo, until 24 hours after treatment.
- Strep throat, until 24 hours after treatment.
- Head lice, until treatment and all nits are removed.
- Scabies, until 24 hours after treatment.
- Chickenpox, until all lesions have dried and crusted.

- Pertussis (Whooping Cough), until 5 days of antibiotics.
- Hepatitis A virus, until one week after immune globulin has been administered.

Children who have been ill may return when:

- They are free of fever, vomiting and diarrhea for 24 hours.
- They have been treated with an antibiotic for 24 hours.
- They are able to participate comfortably in all usual activities.
- They are free of open, oozing skin conditions and drooling (not related to teething) unless:
 - The child's physician signs a note stating that the child's condition is not contagious, and;
 - The involved areas can be covered by a bandage without seepage or drainage through the bandage.
- If a child had a reportable communicable disease, a physician's note stating that the child is no longer contagious and may return to my care is required.

Allergy Prevention

Families are expected to notify me regarding children's food and environmental allergies. Families of children with diagnosed allergies are required to provide me a letter detailing your child's symptoms, reactions, treatments and care.

Medications

All medications should be handed to me with specific instructions for administration. Medications should never be left in your child's cubby or with your child to administer on their own. I will ensure that the medication is recorded along with the directions and proceed to dispense the medication as directed.

- **Prescription medications** require a note signed by the family and a written order from your child's physician. The label on the medication meets this requirement. The medication must include your child's name, dosage, current date, frequency, and the name and phone number of the physician. All medications must be in the original container (you may request pharmacies to fill your prescription in two labeled bottles). Please specify the dosage and time(s) to be administered for each medication. [\[click here and enter your policy on delivery of medications, administration and record keeping\]](#)
- **Non-prescription medications** require a note signed by the [\[click here to insert family and/or physician\]](#). Non-prescription medication will not be administered for more than a 3-day period unless a written order by the physician is received.
- **Non-prescription topical ointments** (e.g., diaper cream) require a note signed by the [\[click here to insert family and/or physician\]](#), specifying frequency and dosage to be administered.

[\[Click here to insert your program's policy on the use of sunscreen\]](#)

[\[Click here to insert your program's policy on the use of insect repellent\]](#)

Communicable Diseases

When a child in my program has a suspected reportable disease, it is my legal responsibility to notify the local Board of Health or Department of Public Health. I will take care to notify families about exposure so children can receive preventive treatments. Included among the reportable illnesses are the following:

-
- Bacterial Meningitis
 - Botulism
 - Chicken Pox
 - COVID-19
 - Diphtheria
 - Hemophilus Influenza (invasive)
 - Measles (including suspect)
 - Meningococcal Infection (invasive)
 - Poliomyelitis (including suspect)
 - Rabies (human only)
 - Rubella Congenital and Non-congenital (including suspect)
 - Tetanus (including suspect)
 - H1N1 Virus
 - Any cluster/outbreak of illness

SAFETY

Home Safety

I pride myself in having a warm, loving and safe environment in which your child can explore, learn and experience many different things. Some features that help ensure your child's safety are:

- Working smoke detectors are on each floor and near cooking and sleeping areas.
- Working carbon monoxide detectors are near the sleeping area.
- Adequate Ventilation throughout my home.
- No guns or firearms on premises.
- Gates are used on stairways when children under [5 years old] are present.
- Fire extinguishers are maintained properly.
- Toys are age appropriate, in good repair and of a non-violent nature.
- Electrical outlets are covered.
- Pens, pencils and office supplies are out of reach.
- Knives and adult scissors are out of reach.
- Cleaners, chemicals, matches and fire starters are out of reach.
- The hot water heater is regulated at 120°F.
- Medications are out of reach.
- A well-stocked first aid kit is kept near and expiration dates are observed.
- Animals are child-friendly, properly immunized and in good health.
- I am certified in Infant & Child CPR and Pediatric First Aid.
- Hot radiator and water pipes are covered or out of reach or not very hot to the touch.
- Safe grassy areas to play.
- Yard is free of splinters and harmful objects.
- Safety approved play equipment and toys.
- Yard routinely treated to deter insects.
- Outside areas where children play is fenced and gate locked.
- Children do not play outside unsupervised.
- Ponds, wells, tool sheds and other hazards are fenced or closed off.

Clothing

Please dress your child in practical clothing that allows for freedom of movement and is appropriate for the weather. Your child will be involved in a variety of activities including: painting, outdoor play, sand, weather, and other sensory activities. My yard is used as an extension of my program, and daily activities are conducted outside whenever weather permits.

One particular aspect of concern is the risk associated with children's clothing that may become entangled with climbing or sliding equipment that could lead to choking or other serious harm. All drawstrings from children's clothes should be removed as a precaution.

Sandals and flip-flops are not appropriate for program play and make it difficult for your child to participate in some activities.

Extreme Weather and Outdoor Play

Outdoor play will not occur if the outside temperature is greater than [\[click here to enter maximum high temperature\]](#) °F or less than [\[click here to enter minimum low temperature\]](#) °F degrees. Additionally, outdoor play will be cancelled if the air quality rating is [\[click here to enter minimum air quality rating\]](#) or below.

Injuries

First aid will be administered by me in the unlikely event that your child sustains a minor injury (e.g., scraped knee). You will receive a report outlining the incident and course of action taken. If the injury produces any type of swelling or needs medical attention, you will be contacted immediately. My program is equipped with a first aid kit meeting the state regulations.

In the event of a serious medical emergency, your child will be taken to the hospital immediately by ambulance, while I will try to contact you or an emergency contact.

Biting

Biting is a normal stage of development that is common among infants and toddlers – and sometimes even among preschoolers. It is something that most young children will try at least once.

When biting happens, my response will be to care for and help the child who was bitten and to help the biter learn a more appropriate behavior. My focus will not be on punishment for biting, but on effective behaviors that address the specific reason for biting.

Notes will be written to the family of the child who was bitten and the biter's family. I will work with the families of both to keep them informed and to develop strategies for change.

Pets/Animals

[A] I do not have any pets on the premises.

[B] I do have [\[click to enter the number of pets\]](#) pets on the premises. [\[click here to enter descriptions of the pets\]](#). The pets on my premises are very friendly, deemed healthy by a veterinarian and are current on all immunizations.

Respectful Behavior

All children and families will be treated with respect and dignity. In return, I expect the same from all families. I will not tolerate hostile or aggressive behavior. If this occurs, I reserve the right to ask you to control your behavior or to remove your child from my care.

Smoking

The poisons in secondhand smoke are especially harmful to infants and young children's developing bodies, therefore the indoor and outdoor program environment and vehicles used by my program are non-smoking areas at all times. The use of tobacco in any form is prohibited on my program's premises.

Prohibited Substances

Any adult who appears to be inebriated, intoxicated, or otherwise under the influence is required to leave the premises immediately.

Dangerous Weapons

A dangerous weapon is a gun, knife, razor, or any other object, which by the manner it is used or intended to be used, is capable of inflicting bodily harm. Families, children or guests (other than law enforcement officers) possessing a dangerous weapon will not be permitted onto the premises.

In cases that clearly involve a gun, or any other weapon on my premises, the police will be called and the individual(s) involved will be immediately removed from the premises. This policy applies to visible or concealed weapons.

Child Custody

Without a court document, both parents/guardians have equal rights to custody. I am legally bound to respect the wishes of the parent/guardian with legal custody based on a certified copy of the most recent court order, active restraining order, or court-ordered visitation schedule. I will not accept the responsibility of deciding which parent/guardian has legal custody where there is no court documentation.

Suspected Child Abuse

I am required by law to report all observations of child abuse or neglect cases to the appropriate state authorities if I have reasonable cause to believe or suspect a child is suffering from abuse or neglect or is in danger of abuse or neglect, no matter where the abuse might have occurred. The child protective service agency will determine appropriate action and may conduct an investigation. It then becomes the role of the agency to determine if the report is substantiated and to work with the family to ensure the child's needs are met. My program will cooperate fully with any investigation and will maintain confidentiality concerning any report of child abuse or neglect.

EMERGENCIES

Lost or Missing Child

In the unlikely event that a child becomes lost or separated from the group during an outing or fieldtrip and is not located within **click here to enter number** minutes, the family and the police will be notified.

Fire Safety

My home is fully equipped with

[\[click here to insert all fire safety features including alarms, lights, and rolling cribs etc.\]](#)

My fire evacuation plan is reviewed with the children on a [\[click here to enter frequency\]](#) basis.

Emergency Transportation

In the event your child needs to be transported due to a medical emergency, if no other authorized person can be contacted and the need for transportation is essential, an ambulance will be called for transportation. A proper escort will accompany and remain with your child until a family member or emergency contact arrives.

FAMILY ACTIVITIES

[\[Edit the list below to match your program. Click to delete.\]](#)

From time to time, I offer an opportunity for families to participate in the activities that help with growth and improvement of their child's education. I encourage families to take an active role.

Examples of Family Events: Please be sure to look at the Bulletin Board for announcements of these activities and events.

- [Holiday Gathering](#)
- [Book Swap](#)
- [Fall Festival](#)
- [Annual Family Picnic](#)

Program Activities: Enjoy and help your child's class with these special activities.

- [Share a meal with your child](#)
- [Chaperone field trips](#)
- [Read to children at arrival or pickup](#)
- [Volunteer in the classroom](#)
- [Donate requested items](#)
- [Contribute to Pot Luck Meal](#)
- [Family Teacher conferences](#)

Family/Parent Workshops: Family workshops change as needed. Below is a list of workshops I may offer. I try to offer these in the early evening or on Saturdays. See the monthly calendar on the Bulletin Board for scheduled topics. I welcome requests for workshop topics.

- [Positive Guidance and Loving Discipline](#)
- [Toilet Training](#)
- [Safety in the Home](#)
- [Child Proofing Your Home](#)
- [Brain Development](#)
- [Nutrition and Exercise for Small Bodies](#)
- [Supporting Your Child in Times of Stress](#)
- [Food Allergies](#)
- [How to Prepare for a Conference](#)
- [Warning Signs for Developmental Delays](#)
- [Value of Reading to Your Child](#)
- [Everyday Math](#)



Family Handbook Acknowledgement

Please sign this acknowledgement, detach it from the handbook, and return it to me prior to enrollment.

I may update this handbook from time-to-time and will provide notice as updates are implemented.

Thank you for acknowledging the policies and procedures I have set up are for the safety and welfare of all children in my care. I look forward to getting to know you and your family.

I have received and reviewed the **Family Handbook**. It is my responsibility to understand and familiarize myself the Family Handbook and to ask questions if I do not understand any policies, procedures or information contained in the **Family Handbook**.

Recipient Signature

Date

Provider's Signature

Date