

Parent Handbook

February 2023

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<p>Smart from the Start Armitage Director: Jenifer Vazquez Email: j.vazquez@smartfromthestart.net 4135 West Armitage Chicago, IL 60639 P: 773-697-7057 Hours: 7:00am-5:30 p.m. Ages served: six weeks to five years</p>	<p>Smart from the Start 79th Street Director: Katrina Davenport Email: k.davenport@smartfromthestart.net 1939 West 79th Street Chicago, IL 60620 P: 773-966-6499 Hours: 7:00 a.m. - 6:00 p.m. Ages served: six weeks to twelve years</p>
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GENERAL COMPANY INFORMATION

MISSION STATEMENT

An individualized learning experience where children, parents, and teachers grow together to instill children with a love of learning.

GOALS FOR THE PROGRAM

- To serve and guide your child in a loving, fun-filled, safe, learning environment.
- Believes childhood is a time for exploring, creating, discovering oneself and meeting the world through many hands-on experiences. It's a time for blossoming and being cherished.
- Our administrators and caregivers are committed to the belief that children can achieve. We believe that most of life's learning, including how to learn, occurs in the first five years of life.
- Our facility is clean and inviting with lots of materials and equipment for both indoor and outdoor activities that your child can use to explore at his/her own pace. This is the perfect place for your child to blossom. We have carefully selected a loving and caring staff. And, together we will work to provide whatever is developmentally appropriate for your child, and help him/her to reach their full potential.
- We respect parents as the most significant providers of care and nurturance. We are pleased to be an extension of the parents.
- Play is essential; it is the way young children learn. With our low student-teacher ratios, our program can be as individualized as possible. The children will refine their social-emotional, language, cognitive, gross-motor, and fine-motor skills throughout our curriculum

CORE VALUES

- **LOVE** – We have a loving cooperative environment. When we show love, we are able to maintain a learning environment by understanding and finding ways to help children through the challenges. We truly become a 'family.' We provide support to each other outside of the classroom because we care. Dropping a child off for child care can be heart wrenching, we can relate and provide all hands on deck to help mom or dad feel at ease.
- **LEARN** –We strive to learn and grow. We provide an approach to education that accounts for the whole (social, emotional, developmental) child. We are constantly looking for ways to grow as an organization. We are not satisfied with the ordinary, we strive to be extraordinary.
- **COLLABORATE** – We collaborate to elevate one another. We are a cohesive unit: staff, family and children. One team working together to fully support the children and each other. We are masters of lighting each other's candles and are confident that it can only make yours shine brighter.

HOLIDAYS

The center is closed for the following national holidays:

- NEW YEAR'S DAY
- MEMORIAL DAY
- JUNETEENTH
- 4TH OF JULY
- LABOR DAY
- THANKSGIVING AND THE DAY AFTER (SCHOOL SPECIFIC-PLEASE ASK YOUR DIRECTOR)
- BETWEEN CHRISTMAS AND NEW YEARS – (this may vary from year to year; families will be notified at least 30 days in advance)

Holidays that fall on a Saturday or Sunday will be observed on either the Friday or Monday surrounding the holiday.

These closures have already been taken into consideration when setting your tuition rate. There will not be any credit given for holiday closings or illness.

RISK MANAGEMENT

Every effort is made to provide a safe environment for children. The center entrance will always be locked to prevent unauthorized entrance. We are equipped with a fire alarm system. Evacuation routes are posted throughout the center. Emergency exits are clearly marked. Staff are trained in CPR and First Aid. We will conduct fire drills once a month and tornado drills every six months. Ask to see our complete risk management plan for further details.

COOPERATING WITH REGULATORY AGENCIES

Our school meets or exceeds state standards for licensure. The license is displayed in the Director's office. The staff is mandated to report cases of suspected child abuse or neglect to DCFS. Any video evidence will be able to be viewed by regulatory agencies, but not parents.

RELEASE OF INFORMATION

No records will be released without written consent of the parent or guardians. Except in the event of extreme emergency, when there is evidence of child abuse or neglect, information will be given to authorized individuals at the Department of Children and Family Services.

BABYSITTING

Babysitting between teachers and families is not allowed while the employee is employed by the center or the family currently attends the school. This prevents any challenges that may arise regarding the care of your child at the center.

OPEN DOOR POLICY

We have an open door policy. Parents are allowed to visit the center without an appointment any time during normal hours of operation.

NON-DISCRIMINATION POLICY

Our school does not discriminate against anyone (adult or child, staff or parent) on the basis of sex, age, religion, national origin, race, marital status, physical or mental disability, or veteran status.

Our school includes children with special needs and makes accommodations as required by the Americans with Disabilities Act.

ENROLLMENT AND PARENT ORIENTATION

GENERAL ADMISSIONS REQUIREMENTS

Admission is determined by the availability of space for a particular group and your position on the waiting list. Orientation for admission will be made by appointment. We reserve the right to accept or reject enrollment applications.

Before a child is enrolled, the following items are mandatory:

- Payment of the Annual Enrollment Fee—nonrefundable. All families are required to pay this annual enrollment fee at the time of enrollment and every March after.
- Current physical examination form documenting all updated immunizations -must be updated every physical and as your child receives immunizations on schedule-Director will send frequent reminders
- Copy of Child's Birth Certificate (within 30 days of start)
- Verification of diet restriction, if any, from the parent or doctor.
- First week/month of tuition (depending on how your school bills)

In order to pull out of the program or switch your days within the program, we require at least a 60-day notice (tuition will be required during this time).

- Children must be of age for the class they are entering by September 1 which is in alignment with established requirements concerning age for public schools.
- Children may be retained at the parent's request (if space permits).
- Children should be fully potty-trained to enter the three- or four-year-old program. If they are still "in process" we will work with them to continue what you've begun. Diapers are not included in the tuition charges for children in the 3-4 year old classroom and older.

Parents will be asked to provide toilet training materials if needed in the 3-4 year old classroom or older.

- Registration for the new school year begins in March before the fall start-up.
- Preschool classes are filled as openings are available in the following order of preference: Current students and siblings are given the opportunity to register first, then our enrollment proceeds to be scheduled utilizing our wait list.
- Specific teacher requests cannot be guaranteed.
- Children registering after April will be placed according to the above procedures as openings are available.

Upon registration, the Family Enrollment Packet must be complete and a current record of immunization and physicals must be provided.

ENROLLMENT FORMS

Parents/legal guardians will receive a packet of forms, which will need to be completed and kept on file prior to the child's first day of attendance. These forms are as follows:

- Annual Enrollment Fee (Non- Refundable) All families are required to pay this annual enrollment fee at the time of enrollment and every March after.
- Enrollment
- Physical Examination and Immunization
- Certified copy of child's birth certificate
- Health History
- Medication authorization, if necessary
- Emergency contact form
- Photo Release
- Parent Agreement
- Positive guidance and discipline policy
- Other forms as required

Forms are available in the office. If any information changes, please let us know as soon as possible. In the event of an emergency, we need to be able to call you at any time.

In accordance with the State Licensing, childcare services are available without discrimination on the basis of sex, race, color, creed, disability, sexual orientation, national origin or ancestry. We are an equal opportunity provider and employer.

CERTIFICATE OF BIRTH CERTIFICATE REQUIREMENT

The parent or guardian of any child to be enrolled for the first time must provide a certified copy of the child's birth certificate. We will make a copy and provide it to the parent or guardian no later than the end of the next business day. Please note we are required by law to notify the Illinois State Police of local law enforcement agencies if the parent or guardian fails to submit proof of the child's identity within the 30-day time frame.

DISMISSAL OF ENROLLMENT

We reserve the right to dismiss a child for any reason. Some reasons may include:

1. Parent/guardian or child jeopardizes the health and safety of other children.
2. Parent/guardian or child displays abusive conduct (*some examples*: swearing, threatening, hitting/pushing, negative social media content, etc.) towards staff, other children, or the school property. (Child Behavior Intervention Plan-Appendix A)
3. Parent/guardian is uncooperative with the staff, operating policies, admission agreement, or become delinquent in payment fees.

We believe that every parent, child, or staff is entitled to be treated with respect at all times. If there is a problem, we want to deal with it as professionally and efficiently as possible. By working together as a team, we can provide the best care possible for your child. If a situation occurs we will schedule a conference and discuss possible solutions. If we have not come to an agreement, we will provide you with three alternate child care providers that may be better at meeting your needs.

VOLUNTARY WITHDRAWAL

Parents or guardians must give a two-month prior notification, in the case of withdrawal. Parents or guardians must also give a one-month notice if there is a switch from full to part time care. The Enrollment Form is valid and binding from the day it is signed.

BILLING AND FEES

TUITION PAYMENTS

See the center director for the current tuition rates.

- Our rates include nutritious meals, snacks and drinks. Field trips are extra.
- When both siblings are enrolled in one of our programs, we apply a 10% discount to the oldest child (Not Applicable for Action for Children Recipients)
- The director will notify families of their tuition due date.
- Absences: Childcare fees are based on enrollment, not attendance. Therefore, to maintain your child's spot in the classroom, fees must be paid during the absence of the child due to illness, holidays, vacations, school closings, or for any other reason. Parents should call the center to notify staff of their child (ren)'s absence.
- Your tuition will be prorated if your child begins school in the middle of a tuition period.
- Additional charges may occur for special events and field trips. You will be notified in advance for these occasions. Payment for all special events will be due one-week prior to the day of the event. If the event entails leaving the school premises and you choose for

your child to NOT participate, you will need to make alternate arrangements for your child's care on the day of the event.

Note: There will be NO tuition refunds for a child going home early due to illness or personal matters.

METHODS OF PAYMENT

Through Brightwheel, families have several options to pay tuition and fees including: automatic ACH deductions, and monthly one-time credit card payments*. Other methods include payment by check or money order (cash is not preferred).

*Credit card fees are passed through to the family.

SCHOOL CLOSINGS

In the event of a school closure, families will continue to pay their regular tuition. In the case of inclement weather, we strive to stay open as long as the safety of the staff, parents, and children are maintained. Closure announcements will be made as late as midnight and as early as 5:00 a.m. on the day of care.

RATES

Parents or guardians will be notified at least one month in advance of any increase in tuition or other fees.

INSURANCE

The center carries liability insurance as required by the state. The insurance will not include medical coverage for illness.

CHILD ATTENDANCE

ATTENDANCE

Upon enrolling, our families are asked to provide the center with a schedule of approximate drop off and pick up times. Any change in your child's schedule whether it is for one day or more needs to be communicated to your child's teacher and/or Center Director.

REPORTING CHILDREN'S ABSENCES

All parents want a safe and healthy environment for their children. Therefore, if your child is ill, please do not bring him/her to the center. We care about the protection of each individual

child, in addition to the health and welfare of the entire group. See the health and illness section for more details on symptoms.

ARRIVAL AND HOURS OF OPERATION

The center operates Monday through Friday, hours vary per location, except for listed holidays and vacations. Admitting hours start as early as the center opens, however not before that time. Children can never be allowed on the premises before operating hours or without permission from the Director.

Children need to be dropped off by 9:30am unless arrangements are made with directors. This ensures they are at the school when curriculum begins.

DEPARTURE

At the time of pick up, please identify yourself. After you obtain your child, please sign your child out. If someone beside yourself is authorized to pick up your child, please have identification (state id or license) available. The person will not be able to pick up the child until confirmation is made.

SEPARATION OF CHILD FROM PARENT

Dropping off at school may be difficult for the parent as well as the child. If the child cries at the moment of separation, he/she will rarely continue for more than a few minutes. Remember, it usually takes at least 3 or 4 weeks for a child to completely adjust. Give the situation some time and encourage your child. This will make the separation less frightening. Our staff is trained to deal with separation anxiety and will make every effort to help make the transition smooth. Parents are also very encouraged to say goodbye to their child every morning. Although it may be hard at first, it shows the child that you are leaving but you will return. Phone calls, texts, emails, or even random visits are ALWAYS welcome to check on your child throughout the day

LATE PICKUP

Our schools have designated close times. Families that pick up after the school is closed are considered tardy. Chronic tardiness will be assessed for appropriateness for the program. Late pick-ups require additional staff time, *therefore late fees start at \$15 (per children) for the first 15 minutes and \$1 per minute (per child) after will be assessed.* ALL LATE FEES MUST BE PAID BEFORE THE CHILD IS ALLOWED TO RETURN TO THE PROGRAM.

After 15 minutes, if there is no one present to pick up the child, attempts will be made to contact the parent(s). After unsuccessful attempts to contact the parent(s), attempts to

contact an individual on the Emergency Contact List, to pick up the child. And last, after unsuccessful attempts to contact someone on the Emergency Contact List, we will go to the nearest police station.

The Director or teacher will follow police instructions and remain with the child until the situation is resolved (parent arrives or law enforcement officials take responsibility for the child).

SIGN IN AND OUT

It is required by law that you sign your child in and out everyday. At sign out time, only the designated person can sign the child out. We will not release your child to anyone other than those listed on the Designated Pick-Up Person form. Any person, other than the parent, authorized to pick up, must be on the pick-up list, and must show a picture id (State Identification Card or Driver's License). If for any reason there is a person not listed and needs to pick up the child, the parent must give authorization in advance. Whenever taking a person off the pick up list, parents must do so in writing. Please note: designated person must be 18 years of age or older.

PICK-UP LIST

Children may be released to parents/legal guardians. If someone other than parents/legal guardians need to pick up your child, please remember the following:

- Written notice or a phone call must be given by a parent/legal guardian stating who will be picking up their child.
- The person picking up must have a valid photo ID.
- We will abide by legal decisions regarding custody made by the court. We request copies of any legal decisions and will keep all information confidential.

We may call you to confirm the pick-up person if necessary. If you cannot be reached and there is a question about the pick-up person, we will NOT release the child. This is for the safety and protection of the child. In an emergency, we will allow for a verbal confirmation of a different pick-up person, if all those listed are unavailable for pick up.

IMPAIRMENT

If an authorized pick-up person arrives at the center and appears to be impaired by drugs or alcohol, the staff person in charge will attempt to keep the individual at the center, away from the children while another staff member contacts an alternate pickup person. If the person who appears to be impaired by drugs or alcohol takes the child, the staff person in charge will contact the local Police Department and give as much detail regarding the vehicle, including the license plate number if possible. This will be done to diminish the risk of your child, you, or another person being seriously injured.

CAR SEAT

The parents, guardian, or designated representative shall have the appropriate car seat for the child when removing them from the center. The center staff will have no option but to call the police if the child is not restrained properly.

COMMUNICATION

DAILY COMMUNICATION

Daily communication is of great importance with parents/legal guardians and teachers. If a concern or problem arises, parents/legal guardians should address the situation as soon as possible. Primarily parents/legal guardians are asked to address the concern or problem with their child's primary teacher; however if the concern or problem remains unresolved, please contact the Director directly.

Parents may message the staff via **Brightwheel** or contact the center directly. **Brightwheel** is our primary communication, where you can expect photos, videos, newsletters and other important information throughout the day with this app. You will receive an invitation email/text prior to your child's first day.

It is encouraged for Parents or Legal Guardians to email the center at any time with any questions or concerns. The Director or Assistant Director may email families concerns, praises, schedule changes, changes in policy, or other important information.

INFANT DAILY SHEETS

When families start, we set them up in **Brightwheel**. We ask that parents complete the necessary information when checking in your child via the **Brightwheel** to ensure we have documented when the child ate last and was changed/went to the restroom last. We can then make sure your child stays on the schedule we have discussed with you.

Our staff will update this information throughout the course of the day to ensure you have the correct and needed information at pick up time. We encourage parents to have conversations with their children about their day using this app.

CONVERSATION

We hope you form a special bond with your child's teacher and feel comfortable talking to them on a regular basis. Please be cognizant, though, of their priority to care for the children and set up a conference time if you need their attention for an extended period of time.

Our teachers consider your feedback extremely important and want to create an environment where you can openly discuss any problems your child(ren) may be experiencing. If you should have questions or concerns, we ask that you communicate with us at your earliest convenience. As parents, your input is the only way we can be sure we are meeting your needs, and we hope that you feel comfortable in knowing we will bring to your attention any needs or concerns we may observe in your child, during their time in our care.

Accommodations can be made if at any time, the parent/guardian requires a confidential meeting space with either the child's teacher or Director. Schedule your meeting with the Director either

face-to-face or through email. A designated space will be reserved for the meeting per the parent request.

WEBSITE

Each of our schools offers an informative website for current and prospective parents. Our website provides information about our center, programs and contact information.

FACEBOOK

We post daily to the school's Facebook. Families can find information on upcoming news, events, and even see fun pictures shared throughout the day.

PARENT/TEACHER CONFERENCE

Parent/Teacher conferences may be held at your school. Your Director will communicate with you in advance so you can sign up to meet with your child's teacher one-on-one.

PARENT SURVEY

As a center, we are constantly striving to improve our quality. We want to offer your children the very best care and education possible to prepare them for a lifelong love of learning. Your feedback is always important to us and helps us make important decisions on changes and specific quality and policy improvements. Our goal is to send an annual survey to families.

Once the results of the survey are tabulated, a summary is sent to you highlighting the strengths of the center, areas of improvement and the center's plan for changes based on the results of the survey. You are always encouraged to discuss any concerns or issues at any time throughout the year, not just during the survey.

REPORTING SUSPECTED CHILD ABUSE AND NEGLECT

Staff members are mandated child abuse and neglect reporters as required by the Abused and Neglected Child Reporting Act. If abuse or neglect is suspected, the parents will be notified of our intent to file a report with the Illinois Department of Children and Family Services. We will always make a report when it is warranted.

The State of Illinois defines abuse as: sexual abuse which includes touching; physical abuse injuries, including welts, burns, cuts, etc.; and verbal/emotional abuse including constant belittling or cursing at a child. Neglect is defined as: failure to provide food; failures to provide nurturance; or disregard towards medical problems.

These reports are being made to protect the child, the parent, and our school.

NOTIFICATION OF COMMUNICABLE DISEASES

In the event any child is diagnosed with a communicable disease, a notice will be sent via **Brightwheel** to the effected classrooms. The name of the persons involved will be kept

confidential. Contagious illnesses require a doctor's note stating when the child was seen and can return to GROUP care.

ALLERGIES

During the enrollment process, parents' complete forms to communicate any and all allergies to teachers and staff. In addition, parents need to explain to teachers about the child's allergies in detail and together agree on steps to be taken to ensure the child's allergies are understood and all precautions are taken. It is our policy to keep all allergies confidential and not share information with other families.

All children's names and allergies are listed in each child's file, Director's file, in each classroom and also kept within **Brightwheel**. Medications for allergies are kept in the office and taken when children leave the center for field trips.

All children's allergies are posted in a confidential, easy to access place in the classroom and in the kitchen. Kitchen staff is made aware of all children with their allergies and restrictions. Should allergies change, please notify the Director and teachers immediately. Paperwork will also need to be updated.

CHANGE OF NAME OR ADDRESS

It is the parent's responsibility to notify the Director in writing of any change of address, home or phone numbers, work schedules, and authorized pick up names and numbers.

CHILD CUSTODY

Legal decisions regarding issues of child custody will be respected. In fairness to parents and children, a copy of any court documentation should be provided for the file.

CLASSROOM & AREAS OF DEVELOPMENT

CURRICULUM

Children are constantly learning through everyday experiences and they are constructing their own knowledge and understanding of the world. It is important to be conscious of the whole learning environment such as time, utilizing classroom space (learning centers), resources, and ideas. Preschool is an important time to learn and develop life skills. At this age children are learning to be an individual as well as attaining social skills in order to be a successful part of a group setting. It is important to display a diverse curriculum to encourage non-stereotypical experiences so that children gain an appreciation of our society.

The foundation of our curriculum is to teach children everyday morals such as, respect for themselves and others, resolving conflict, decision making and maintaining healthy relationships. To attain this goal, we have several major components to our curriculum, which are listed below.

Goals of the Curriculum:

- To develop the child as a whole.
- To provide a positive sense of identity and emotional well-being
- To develop age-appropriate social, physical, language and literacy skills
- To encourage thinking, reasoning, questioning and experimentation
- To provide exposure to the arts and encourage creative expression
- To demonstrate proper health, safety and nutritional practices
- To respect gender, age and cultural diversity.

Core Curriculum Beliefs:

- Children learn best by a “hands-on” approach that is diverse in activity and purpose.
- Children need exposure to the beauty of the natural world in order to understand their place in the world.
- Children need exposure to gardening, the arts, and music in order for creativity to flourish.
- Each family is unique, and we celebrate differences.
- Learning can take place in many different forms and in many different settings.
- Children learn what they live therefore we aim to be a good role model for children at all times
- Children need sensory rich environments that include plants, sand and water.

Daily schedule & activities:

The Lead Teacher and Assistant Teacher work cooperatively to create a daily schedule and plan activities that meet each child’s developmental abilities and needs.

The daily schedule and activities create a balance between active and quiet times; large and small group, and individual activities; small and large muscle activities; indoor and outdoor play times; as well as times for self-selection and teacher-directed activities.

Sample daily schedule:

Time	Activity
6:15-8:30 am	Morning Drop-Off, Hand Washing, Breakfast, Free Play
6:15-8:30 am	Clean-Up
6:15-8:30 am	Circle Time
9:30-10:00 am	Wash Hands + Morning Snack + Wash Hands
10:00-11:00 am	Fine Motor Skills (Art or Centers)

11:00-11:45 am	Large Motor Skills (Playground)
11:45-12:30 pm	Wash Hands + Lunch + Wash Hands
12:30-2:30 pm	Nap Time
2:30-3:00 pm	Wash Hands + Afternoon Snack + Wash Hands
3:00-3:30 pm	Story Time & Music-n-Movement
3:30-3:45 pm	Bathroom + Wash Hands
4:00-4:30 pm	Large Motor Skills (Playground)
4:30-4:45 pm	Bathroom + Wash Hands
4:45-5:45 pm	Free Play & Pick-up

CONSTANT SUPERVISION OF CHILDREN

Teachers must supervise all children by sight and sound at all times. Children must be supervised both indoors and outside, including during nap time.

Children must be able to be seen and heard at all times by the teacher. For example, if the teacher is working momentarily one-on-one with a child, but is able to see all of the children by slightly moving their position, then this standard is met.

POSITIVE GUIDANCE

The teacher's role is to help children grow in a positive way and learn about acceptable behavior in the classroom, specifically and in society, in general. During the early childhood years, children are learning to be in charge of their own behavior. We believe in establishing consistent, understandable limits and in having adults who respond to inappropriate behavior with insight, sensitivity and skill. If a child acts out, oftentimes, there is an underlying reason. Teachers will look beyond the behavior and understand the child. When clear, consistent and age-appropriate limits are present, children increasingly become responsible for themselves.

When out-of-bound behaviors do occur, we believe it is important for children to understand why the behavior is inappropriate and how to modify it. Younger children may need extra attention when exhibiting bad behavior. This seems contradictory. Teachers may think they are reinforcing bad behavior, but in truth, it is showing them that you like them regardless of what they do. Teachers may contact you throughout the day to problem solve a behavior.

We work to prevent behavior problems by working in small groups with the children and having a choice of activities. The range of activities will give your child the freedom and ability to experience success and become self-directed. The staff establishes predictable limits and helps the children understand the consequences of their actions. For example, a child must learn that throwing a toy in anger may lead to injuries to themselves or those around them, and that such behavior is not acceptable. Children are encouraged to verbalize their feelings to learn to positively work through strong emotions. The staff acts as role models and encourages children's appropriate behaviors. The kind of discipline that will be used will be consistent and followed in a step-by-step method or redirecting inappropriate behavior. Peers will not be allowed to discipline, nor will children be humiliated, physically or verbally abused, threatened, or deprived from eating snacks/lunches.

Younger children should be redirected, their attention taken elsewhere, but their behavior explained in simple terms. Older children may be taken away from their activity but allowed another choice (after talking about the behavior). In extreme cases, teachers will call for help from the office. The Director will remove the child from the classroom and will call the parent, if necessary.

Children will be treated with respect at all times. No matter how poor behavior may get, staff will treat the children as you would want to be treated.

A time may come when we are unable to meet the needs of a particular child. Parents and staff will then meet together to plan how to work together to resolve any discipline issues. It is our top priority to have children remain in our care. We have outside resources to accommodate any special discipline needs. Notice of termination from our care will be our last resort.

CELEBRATING BIRTHDAYS

We're thrilled to celebrate your child's birthday at the center. If you would like us to celebrate the day, we request that you speak to your child's teacher first in order to coordinate a healthy, non-allergenic snack. PLEASE CHECK ALL INGREDIENTS LIST FOR PEANUTS AND TREE NUTS. THIS INCLUDES THE FACILITY WHERE THEY WERE PROCESSED. Store bought treats are required for everyone's safety.

Your child's caregiver may add special songs, games, and stories to make it an extra special day for your child.

RELIGION / CULTURE / CELEBRATING HOLIDAYS

As we serve children of many faiths, no religion will be emphasized more than the others. However, at times, religious holidays may be discussed, such as Christmas, Easter, Hanukkah, etc. We want to teach the children that our differences should be celebrated. Children and families are encouraged to bring in books, traditional clothing, musical instruments, etc. to teach the children about their culture.

PERSONAL BELONGINGS

There will be designated days throughout the year when children are allowed to bring an item from home such as "Show and Tell". Teachers will notify families when "Show and Tell" days are.

There are guidelines to what is not acceptable such as: money, candy, food, gum, weapons, breakable objects, and any items regarding violence or profanity. Please do not allow your child to bring items from home to school that may be a distraction or get lost. Outside of these designated days, we require children to leave outside toys and food at home.

SPECIAL ACCOMODATIONS

Our center will make every effort to accommodate children with differing abilities and needs. Each child will be accommodated on an individual basis. Teachers, parents and management will work together to best serve each child. Teachers working with children with differing abilities will be informed of the child's special health care needs including any physical, emotional, social, or cognitive abilities with confidentiality and sensitivity. We accept children with differing abilities as long as we are assured, we can fully meet the child's needs and the needs of other children in the group with reasonable accommodation. In all cases, the children must be able to participate and substantially benefit from our program without risk to him/her or to other children. If a child requires one on one attention full time, our staff may not be able to accommodate these needs.

TRANSITIONS

A transition of children to the next, older classroom occurs at different times during the year. Transitions are dependent on the child's readiness (age is only one factor). In addition, the recommendation from the current teacher and proposed classroom teacher, and availability in the next class are considered. Because of the lack of availability, it is impossible to promise the transition into a particular classroom. However, the academic needs of the child will always be met. In cases of an approved transition, teachers will begin to talk to the children about the class; visit; then nap in the class prior to the actual move into the class.

Parents are welcome and encouraged to setup a time to visit the child's new room. Transition plans also are provided and approved by parents before the transition begins. If we have more than one child ready to move and both are about the same developmentally, we will be transitioning the oldest child first.

OUTDOOR ACTIVITY

All children play outdoors at their scheduled time each day, weather permitting. A parent's request to keep their child inside is difficult, if not impossible, to accommodate because staff are not always available to provide supervision to an individual child. In this case, the parent may choose to keep the child home.

We WILL go outside unless it is colder than 30 degrees F, wind chill considered, or hotter than 100 degrees F, so please be sure your child is dressed for the weather. Do not worry about your child being outside for very long, because teachers get cold/hot long before the children do!

VISITS / TRIPS / EXCURSIONS

Your child may participate in walking field trips when planned by the staff as a regular part of the children's program/curriculum.

Parents will be informed, in advance, of any field trips that our school will take. Parents are responsible for signing permission slips and returning them before the day of the field trip. In some cases where there is a safety concern, parents may be asked to either accompany their child on the trip, or keep the child at home. Field trips will require more adult supervision, and parents are encouraged to volunteer.

Parents are always welcome to join the fun! We will use a licensed transportation service for all group driving field trips. No trip will take place unless there is a safe ratio of adults to children.

When the weather permits, we have the opportunity to go on walks throughout the neighborhoods or trips to local parks.

TRANSPORTATION

Transportation is available at some schools. Drivers are licensed and insured. Transportation charges will apply and vary per school.

If applicable, other schools transportation will be provided to and from field trips through a licensed bus transportation company which you will be notified in advance of the up and coming trips.

COMPANY PERSONNEL

CENTER STAFF

Our educators are chosen by their educational background, experience with children, and their love for children. Our center follows state regulations in hiring new staff. Each staff member has passed a background check done by the State of Illinois. Each staff member is approved by DCFS. The staff is warm and loving, open to children's needs, and flexible in their actions.

Each staff member has also signed a confidentiality agreement. Our staff is forbidden by law and by administration to talk about any of their students or families outside of work. They are prohibited to post pictures and names of any children in the center on the Internet, including all forms of social media.

Basic roles and responsibilities to maintain a safe environment for your child and reduce conflict amongst the children, the following rules are strictly enforced:

- No chewing gum or hard candy
- No cough drops
- No jewelry that would encourage young children to put in their mouths
- No money (child could put in mouth and choke)

Discipline Rules/Guidelines for Staff require that all staff members must abide by the discipline policies and those in accordance with the Illinois Department of Children and Family Services.

Discipline Rules for Parents require that all parents must abide by the discipline policy and also be subject to the rules and regulations set forth by the Illinois Department of Children and Family Services while at our school.

VOLUNTEERS OR THERAPISTS

The State requires that therapists, volunteers, and student teachers must be at least 18 years of age and pass a criminal background check. Volunteers are required to be screened for and will not have a substantiated report of child abuse or neglect, will not have had a felony conviction on record within the past five (5) years, their name will not be on the Sex Offender Registry. Volunteers are not factored into the staff-to-child ratios.

SUDDEN INFANT DEATH SYNDROME RISK REDUCTION(SIDS)

Staff will receive training in Sudden Infant Death Syndrome and will be trained and follow these risk reduction procedures:

Infant & Toddler Bedding

- Sheets or blankets used to cover the child shall be tucked tightly under the mattress and shall be kept away from the child's mouth and nose.
- If the child pulls the blanket out during nap time the provider must ensure that that blanket is kept away from the child's mouth and nose. The use of blanket sleepers or sleep sacks is recommended as long as their arms can move freely. Per state regulations, we are not allowed to swaddle infants.

Soft Materials in Cribs

- Children under one year of age may not sleep in a crib that contains soft materials such as sheepskins, pillows, fluffy blankets, bumper pads or stuffed animals.
- Fluffy blankets such as quilts and comforters contain more than one layer of fabric or batting are also not allowed to be with a sleeping child under the age of one in a crib or playpen.

Individual Sleep Patterns

- Each infant and each toddler shall be allowed to form and follow his or her own pattern of sleeping and waking.
- There shall be no specifically scheduled nap time for all infants (under the age of one) as a group.
- As children begin to mature, a child's schedule will be changed to slowly eliminate the a.m. nap and slowly integrate the child into the center schedule. Priority shall be given to the individual eating and sleep needs of the child.

Sleep Position

- Each child under one year of age shall be placed to sleep on his/her back unless otherwise specified in writing by the child's physician. The child shall be allowed to assume the position most comfortable to him or her when able to roll over unassisted.
- If a child falls asleep in a swing or bouncy seat, the child must be removed from the swing or bouncy seat and placed to sleep on his or her back.

CHILDCARE OFF PREMISE

It is our policy to not allow our staff to contract independently with families on providing offsite babysitting.

HEALTH, SAFETY, & NUTRITION

RISK MANAGEMENT

Every effort is made to provide a safe environment for children. The center entrance will always be locked to prevent unauthorized entrance. We are equipped with a fire alarm system. Evacuation routes are posted throughout the center. Emergency exits are clearly marked. Staff are trained in CPR and First Aid. We will conduct fire drills once a month and tornado drills every six months. Ask to see our complete risk management plan for further details.

EMERGENCY AND DISASTER PREPAREDNESS

To prepare for emergencies or disasters, we have developed an Emergency Plan. Staff are trained during the new hire orientation and annually on the plan to ensure the safety of children in our care. Staff members are First Aid and CPR certified and prepared to handle an emergency.

Our standard procedures include safety drills, teaching children to listen and to follow their teachers. At all times, emergency supplies are maintained. These include food, water, battery, radio, cell phones, flashlights and first aid supplies.

In the event that an emergency occurs during school hours, be assured that we will do our utmost to protect the safety and wellbeing of all of the children entrusted in our care.

General Power Outage: In case of a general power outage, you will be contacted by phone to pick up your child.

Severe Weather: In the event of a thunderstorm warning, we will keep children indoors and monitor the situation. In the event that a tornado warning has been issued, we will take appropriate coverage (see evacuation plans near classroom doors).

Complete Evacuation: If we are required to completely evacuate the building (in the event of a flash flood, fire or other emergency that threatens the integrity of the structure, we can be found at our designated evacuation location. See your center director for the details.

Building Service Loss: In the event our facility loses main power to items such as heat, air conditioning, water, electricity, telephone, or any plumbing problems, and if we have not been restored within two (2) hours, staff members will contact parents or guardians to pick-up their child promptly.

Fire Evacuation: Take a tablet (containing emergency contact information) and follow the emergency route map located in the classroom. Parents will be contacted by the school to pick up the children.

Tornado / Hurricane Alert: Gather all children as close to the interior wall as possible. Have children lay face-down as flat as they can. Cover children with rugs when the need arises. Try to grab soft toys (dolls, stuffed animals, etc...) to soothe the children. Read a book or sing songs to keep panic to a minimum.

Lockdown: Terrorism / Intruder: Entry into the school is controlled by a locked door. If the school is notified about a suspicious person in the area, teachers will be notified to keep the doors locked & children in the classroom.

For evacuation specific locations, request a copy of the disaster plan from the center director.

EMERGENCY CLOSINGS

During an emergency, parents will be contacted via Brightwheel if they are required to come pick up a child(ren).

MEDICAL EMERGENCY PLAN

Staff will follow the 3 C's prescribed by the American Heart Association:

- Check (Assess vital signs)
- Call (Director, Asst. Dir. OR qualified staff member, call 911)
- Care (Qualified person administer CPR or First Aid as necessary)

EMERGENCY CONTACTS

Current phone numbers for all people authorized to pick-up your child from school must be provided. If you are not readily reachable by phone, a pager number must be provided. In case of injury, emergency medical care will be given. In the event we cannot reach the parent immediately, parents will be responsible for any medical bill incurred.

In case of emergency, staff is authorized to seek medical treatment and physicians are authorized to provide all necessary emergency medical treatment.

If the school needs to evacuate or close, parents will be notified by a phone call or text message from the administrator or teacher.

EMERGENCY SUPPLIES

Each classroom will have a flashlight and a first aid kit. Additional flashlights, blankets, extra batteries, and extra first aid supplies are located in the laundry room.

SHOE POLICY FOR SAFETY

Children in the toddler and preschool classrooms are required to wear shoes at all times. This includes children keeping shoes on while napping. In the event of an evacuation, children must leave the building immediately as there is no time to put on their shoes.

EMERGENCY DRILLS

Emergency Disaster drills will be practiced as required and as outlined in our Disaster Recovery Plan, with and without warning. These drills will be recorded by the Director/Management Staff.

PARKING

We ask that parents DO NOT leave your automobile running when coming into the facility to drop off or pick up your child. We also recommend that you lock your vehicles while coming inside the facility.

HEALTH AND ILLNESS POLICY

All parents want a safe and healthy environment for their children. Therefore, if your child is ill, please do not bring him/her to the center. We care about the protection of each individual child, in addition to the health and welfare of the entire group. See the health and illness section for more details on symptoms.

When the child is sick at school, the child will be brought to the front. There, the child will remain with the Director or teacher in isolation from the other children and staff members. The child will be offered a cot and anything else he/she requests or needs until the parent or guardian arrives. Please come get your child as soon as possible.

If your child has a contagious infection or disease, please keep your child at home as recommended. It is important to inform the center so that necessary precautions may be taken and parents can be properly alerted. In the event that we are notified that a child has contracted a contagious infection, a letter will be posted to inform the parents of the symptoms. If you suspect that your child has a contagious infection, call your doctor and inform the school. PLEASE DO NOT BRING ANY SICK/ILL CHILD TO THE DAY CARE SETTING.

To avoid the spread of infection and illness, you are required to pick your child up during school if one of the following conditions is present:

- A fever of 100 (under arm), 101 (orally) or more within the last 24 hours.
- Vomiting and/or diarrhea.
- Excessively red eyes (conjunctivitis or “pink eye”).
- Hacking cough.
- Contagious rashes.

- Ringworm, pinworm, or other similar skin problems.
- A cold with coughing, a runny nose, and a fever.
- Uncontrollable, discolored runny nose.
- Contagious childhood diseases such as mumps, measles, chicken pox, etc.
- Open mouth sores
- Drainage from the eyes, ears or open sores

Any two or more symptoms from this list requires that your child be picked up from school:

- Cannot participate comfortably in routine activities
- Requires continuous one-on-one care
- Excessively drowsy or appears fatigued
- Having difficulty breathing
- Unexplained loss of appetite
- Flushed or pale appearance
- Complaining of headache, stomachache, dizziness, or pain
- Excessive yellow or green mucus discharge from nose, persistent sneezing

If a child becomes ill during the day, the parent will be contacted immediately. The child will be taken to the sick area and remain there until the parent or authorized person picks up the child to take him/her home.

If a teacher feels your child should not remain in childcare due to sickness, then the daycare staff will refer your child to the childcare director for a final decision. The daycare director may require you to take your child home. If your child returns to school with symptoms, a note from your child's doctor indicating the diagnosis of the illness or symptoms, and clarification that the condition is non-contagious will be required. If the symptoms persist or become worse, your child may be sent home again. We understand that this policy may be inconvenient, but must be followed in accordance with DCFS licensing regulation, section 407.310 c.2. Any contagious illnesses must be reported to the School immediately.

- For head lice, children and staff may return to school after treatment and no nits.
- For scabies, children can return to school after treatment.

Do not bring your child back to the center if they are still ill. Keep your child home for at least 48 hours to give them time to get better.

DOCTORS NOTE

If a child is absent for 3 consecutive days due to illness, has undergone surgery, or has been hospitalized, a doctor's statement is required upon return.

EMERGENCY MEDICAL CARE

Parents will be contacted immediately. Emergency care will be contacted and the children will be taken to the hospital. Director or assistant director will accompany the child to the hospital. Parents will need to go to the hospital immediately to relieve the staff. If a child is exempt from medical care for religious grounds, special arrangements will be made in writing from the parent

at the point of enrollment. An individual plan will be written out for each situation. If a child is hurt during the day, first aid procedures will be followed. An accident report will be filled out and the parent will receive a copy of the incident at the time of pick-up. We will always have staff on hand that is certified by the American Red Cross in First Aid, and in infant/child CPR.

PEANUT POLICY

We are a peanut free facility. This includes all nuts: peanuts, tree nuts, etc. This is to prevent any sort of allergic reactions. Please avoid feeding your child peanut products before entering the facility.

DISPOSAL OF BIO-CONTAMINANTS

The following preventative measures are to be used to reduce the spread of all infectious and contagious diseases.

- Wash hands regularly. Hand washing is the best way to protect both child and caregiver. Use the recommended hand washing technique:
- Use antibacterial liquid soap and scrub hands for 1 minute
- Scrub top of hands, palms, between fingers, and under nails
- Rinse under warm water with hands pointing down
- Dry hands with paper towel
- Turn off the water faucet with a towel before disposing of it
- Wear disposable gloves while cleaning up blood, bloody saliva, urine, feces, or vomit, especially if there is a skin rash or open cut on your hands. If skin contact is made with these substances, wash the affected areas with soap under running water.
- Wear disposable gloves when changing a child's diaper.
- Change gloves after contact with each child. Throw away disposable gloves after each use. Wash hands after wearing gloves.
- Place disposable diapers in a plastic bag. Tie the bag securely.
- Supervise toilet-trained children to ensure that they wash their hands well after using the restroom.
- Clean up blood and bloody fluids on surfaces with 1 part ordinary household bleach diluted in 10 parts water. The bleach solution should be fresh and used the day it is made. Isopropyl alcohol, Lysol disinfectant, and hydrogen peroxide can also be used.

POLICIES ON COMMON COMMUNICABLE DISEASES

“Pink Eye” Conjunctivitis	
Incubation Period:	24 - 72 hours
Communicability:	While signs/symptoms are present

Signs/Symptoms:	Tearing, irritation, puffy eyelids, mucus and pus-like drainage, and intolerance to light
Policy:	Child is to stay home until drainage stops and three doses of medication have been administered

Vomiting	
Incubation Period:	24 - 72 hours
Communicability:	While signs/symptoms are present
Signs/Symptoms:	Tummy aches, shivers, vomiting, pale skin
Policy:	Child is to stay home for 24 hours after the last time they vomited

Impetigo	
Incubation Period:	4 - 10 days
Communicability:	As long as lesions continue to drain. Self-infection may continue for a period of nasal colonization or duration of active lesions.
Signs/Symptoms:	Superficial - vesicular pustular and encrusted stages
Policy:	Medication is required and child must be absent for 24 hours after onset of medication

Strep Throat	
Incubation Period:	2 - 5 days
Communicability:	During acute phase of respiratory illness
Signs/Symptoms:	Sore throat, difficulty swallowing, swollen glands, fever, rash
Policy:	Child may return to care after receiving antibiotic therapy for at least 24 hours and have been fever free for 24 hours without the aid of medication such as Tylenol or Ibuprofen

Pediculosis (Head Lice)	
Incubation Period:	24 hours - 7 days
Communicability:	As long as lice or eggs remain alive on the infested person or in clothing
Signs/Symptoms:	Severe itching and excoriation of scalp or body. Adult lice and nymph are very small, 1-2mm long, gray-tan color. Eggs are about ½ the size and attach firmly to the hair shaft.
Policy:	It is recommended that the child be treated via his/her family physician. The child may return to care 24 hours after the second treatment has been completed. The child may return sooner with a doctor's note verifying the child no longer has lice.

Hand, Foot, Mouth Virus

Incubation Period:	4 - 6 days
Communicability:	As long as lesions/sores are still visible on extremities and in the mouth. As long as the child still has a temperature of 100 degrees or higher.
Signs/Symptoms:	High fever followed by sores in the mouth. Later a rash will probably develop on the hands and feet.
Policy:	It is required that the child no longer have any visible open lesions/sores on extremities and in the mouth. The child must be eating and drinking well. The child must be fever free for 24 hours, without the aid of medication, such as Tylenol or Ibuprofen.

COVID-19

Center will adhere to guidelines as proposed by the CDC (Center for Disease Control) and the World Health Organization (see appendix). At a minimum we will:

- Priority will be given to cleaning and sanitizing toys and frequently used objects. All surfaces will be cleaned and sanitized after every use.
- Use soap and water or an approved sanitizer to kill germs.
- Follow all label instructions.
- Clean frequently touched surfaces, toys, and commonly shared items at least daily and when visibly soiled.
- When cleaning non-absorbent toys such as blocks or plastic toys, wash them with soap and water.
- Wash your hands often with soap and water for at least 20 seconds especially after you have been in a public place, or after blowing your nose, coughing, or sneezing.
- If soap and water are not readily available, use a hand sanitizer that contains at least 60% alcohol. Cover all surfaces of your hands and rub them together until they feel dry.
- Avoid touching your eyes, nose, and mouth with unwashed hands.
- When cleaning fabric toys such as stuffed animals or play clothes, wash them in a washing machine, then air dry or machine dry.
- Center will adhere to special governance placed by local and federal agencies in terms of remaining open, shortening hours, or closing of facilities for a short term. In special occurrences, the center may apply for an essential worker's license.
- Other prevention methods as indicated here:
<https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/prepare/prevention.html>

To limit the spread of germs that cause illness, we will keep the center clean and make sure that supplies are available. It's also important to limit the spread of infection, such as how to keep the center clean, proper hand washing, covering coughs and sneezes, and watching for signs of illness in children.

- Observe closely all infants and children for symptoms of illness.
- Notify the parent if a child develops a fever, chills, cough, sore throat, headache, or muscle aches.
- Send the child home, if possible, and advise the parent to contact the child's doctor.
- Remind parents to keep children home when they are sick and to keep a list of symptoms.
- Remind teachers to stay home when they are sick and to keep a list of symptoms.
- Drop off and pick up will continue to happen outside the building at the door labeled "Toddlers" (the door outside of the Kangaroo room) and parents will not be allowed in the building at this time.
- Temps of both staff and children will be taken at the door prior to entry. Anyone with a temp of 100 or above will not be permitted in the building. Temps are also taken at lunch time for both staff and the children. Any child or staff who is visibly not feeling well, will not be allowed in the center.
- We will continue to practice good hygiene and proper handwashing upon arrival at the center, before and after every meal, after using the restroom, and when returning in from outside.
- Children will continue to remain in their classrooms and separated from other age groups. This minimizes the exposure throughout the building. Staff are also required to stay in their rooms and maintain physical distance during their break times and when gathering supplies. Meals will continue to be served in the classrooms.
- Outside times have been adjusted so that only one classroom is outside at a time on both sides of the fence. Each room has their own designated outside toys that are sanitized after every use. All large play equipment is sanitized between age groups.
- We continue to ask if your child is sick to keep them home. This includes but is not limited to, fever, cough, shortness of breath, chills, lethargy, rash, really runny nose, etc. We will continue to follow the Department of Health's Recommendations for Exclusions in the Childcare Setting. We will continue to not require a doctor note if your child is sent home with a fever or other illness. We ask for your honesty and respect prior to bringing a child back to the center to ensure that they are no longer sick or contagious.

Communication with families and staff:

Every day/hour news can change regarding outbreaks. Our commitment is to ensure our families and staff are informed of any specifics we can communicate. We will engage with our families additionally to determine individual care plans and their needs to determine if we can accommodate their needs within various pandemic/outbreaks.

Tuition payments during a stay at home order or closure due to pandemic/outbreak:

In the case that the center is required by the Department of Public Health to shut down a room for a closure of longer than four days, payment will go as follows: for a first closure, families

affected would receive a 20% reduction on tuition. For any subsequent closure, families would be required to pay their full tuition. Other discounts may be given during a pandemic and will be communicated with families.

Families required to quarantine due to outside circumstances will be required to continue to pay their full tuition.

Family concerns during an outbreak or pandemic:

We will work hard to maintain quick and accurate information during an outbreak to ensure families feel informed. We understand however that additional reassurances may be needed. We ask all concerns or questions be made with your center director.

HANDWASHING

Hand washing is the single most effective practice in preventing the spread of germs. We wash our hands many times throughout the day, as well as the children's hands before and/or after engaging in a thorough list of activities.

Employees wash their hands:

- Before beginning work
- Immediately before handling food or feeding children
- After using the toilet, helping a child use the toilet, or after changing soiled clothing or diapers
- After coming into contact with any bodily fluid, such as a wet or soiled diaper, runny nose, spit or vomit
- Whenever hands are visibly dirty
- After cleaning a child, the room, toys, or bathroom
- Before giving medication or applying ointment
- After work

Children wash their hands:

- When they first enter the center
- Immediately before and after eating
- After using the toilet or having soiled clothing or diaper changed
- Before and after using water tables
- After using play-dough or other substances
- After playing on the playground
- Whenever hands are visibly dirty
- Before going home

INFORMATION FOR PARENTS REGARDING FEVERS

According to the American Academy of Pediatrics, fever is a well-known symptom that the parent or child care workers use to identify a child who may be ill. Fevers (a rise in the body temperature above normal) are common in young children and are rarely harmful. There are

many causes of fever other than illness. Exercise, environmental conditions, individual variation and teething may raise the body temperature.

However, fevers may be a symptom of a contagious or serious illness. Some children with fevers should not go to child care until the child's inclusion in child care is checked by a health professional. Such children include those with an oral temperature of 101 degrees or higher, an auxiliary (armpit) temperature of 100 degrees or higher and who also has had behavior changes or other signs/symptoms of illness.

Any child younger than 4 months of age should be checked immediately by their Pediatrician if they have a temperature of 101 degrees auxiliary or higher. Any child, regardless of age, should be checked immediately by their Pediatrician with a temperature of 105 degrees auxiliary or higher.

The child's response to fever-reducing medicines is not helpful in deciding how sick the child is. Regardless of the presence or height of fever, it is how sick a child acts or looks that is important. Fever-reducing medications may mask signs and symptoms of more severe illnesses. Have a doctor check any child with symptoms or signs of a possibly serious illness (usually drowsiness, fussiness, persistent or excessive crying, wheezing, uncontrolled coughing, difficulty breathing) or who refuses to play or complains of severe pain.

INFORMATION FOR PARENTS REGARDING MEDICATION

Medication will be administered by assigned staff or the Director and only under the following circumstances:

1. Prescribed medication or non-prescription drugs must be under doctor's orders.
2. A permission slip must be written and signed by the parent.
3. The original container and label must bear the child's name, directions for administering the medication, date, and doctor's name.

Allergies to medication must be kept on file for emergency situations. All allergies must be on a signed statement by the physician or a parent's signed statement.

All administration of prescribed medications and non-prescription medication will be recorded in a medication administration log with the date, time, child's name, name of the medication, and the dosage given and the name and signature of the staff member administering the medication.

We have the right to refuse to administer medication at the discretion of the Director. It is preferred medication is NOT administered at our school if at all possible.

HEALTH AND MEDICAL FORM

The well being of your child is important to you, to us, and the State of Illinois. Therefore, there are certain laws established by the State for our benefit. Your cooperation is essential as we seek

to follow the laws. Please remember that we have a responsibility for the health of all the children in the center.

Each child must have a completed medical form signed by his/her doctor prior to attendance at the daycare - should be dated no later than 6 months from the time of enrollment. Public Health mandates that your child must have:

1. An up-to-date medical form, which must be updated every two years.
2. A TB test with results.
3. DPT must have a physician's signature and date.
4. Polio, measles, and mumps must be up to date. A second dose of MMR is to be given between the ages of 4 and 6.
5. Hib must be up to date.
6. Lead Screening with results.
7. Physician form must have a physician's signature and date.
8. Any allergies (food, medication, etc.) must be listed.
9. Medical forms must be filled out completely.

CHILDREN WITH SPECIAL ABILITIES

When a child comes to us with special abilities or health care needs, information will only be shared with staff directly involved with the care of the child. If specialized equipment is needed, the parent or guardian will train staff in proper procedures. If a child requires one on one attention full time, our staff may not be able to accommodate these needs.

IMMUNIZATIONS AND PHYSICAL EXAMINATIONS

Children must follow the State recommended immunization schedule and provide a written record to the center. The State requires families who do not vaccinate their child(ren) to have a notarized Immunization Affidavit signed with proper reason and returned to the Director. These forms can be found in the main office. It is the parent's responsibility to keep us up to date when their child receives their immunizations.

FIRST AID

Teachers at the center are trained in First Aid, AED and CPR (Infant, Child and Adult). According to State licensing standards, teachers are able to wash the wound with soap and water, apply an ice pack (if necessary), or place a Band-Aid/bandage (if necessary). Teachers are not able to remove a sliver or stinger. Parents will be called if additional medical attention is needed or if the injury is severe enough that your child needs to be taken to the doctor.

INJURIES AND ACCIDENTS

Accident/Incident reports will be filled out when children are injured at our school. An injury that requires a report is anything that requires cleansing, a band-aid, an ice pack, or any medical attention. Teachers who witness the accident or injury will fill out the injury report; parents/legal guardians should then sign the form upon notification of accident/incident. These forms are kept in the child's file for 6 months.

Parents/legal guardians will be notified immediately of any head injuries or injuries that require professional medical attention. Any injury that might leave a possible bruise will also be reported. If parents/legal guardians cannot be reached in the event of an emergency, the center will make all efforts to contact another person on the child's emergency card. In critical emergencies 911 may be called before a parent is notified.

In case of a medical emergency, the staff will take the steps necessary to assure the safety and secure the medical care of the child. The staff may do, but not limited to the following procedures:

- Attempt to call the parents/guardians
- Attempt to contact the emergency contacts if parents/guardians aren't available
- Call the child's physician
- Administer First Aid or CPR
- Call 911 for medical assistance

NUTRITION AND MEAL SERVICE

Most schools provide all home cooked meals meaning, everything is cooked on site. Other schools have catering. At meal times, children are expected to try all of their food on their plate before they request more of something. It is ok if they do not like a certain food, but they will still be encouraged to try it. . Milk will be served at breakfast and lunch, while water or milk will be served for snack. The children can always have water after their first glass of milk or more milk if they would like. If your child does not drink milk, they may have water or other milk alternatives provided by the parents (Milk must be nut-free).

When the child is done with their meal, they need to ask to be excused from the table or tell the teacher that they are all done. This helps the teachers keep track of how the child ate that day and aids in classroom management to give the teachers time for their next transition into nap or next activity. Water will be offered several times a day and whenever the child requests it.

****No Outside food allowed in the center, except breast milk or formula.***

*****Meals can not be held over 30 minutes from when initially served. (Times are specific per school).***

INFANT PROGRAM

We set the pace around the needs and unique differences of each child. Our infant program has primary caregivers who center their day on the needs of those whom they provide care. While meeting basic needs of food, diapering, and adequate rest, the teachers go far beyond that. Your caregivers are keen observers who plan and enhance the interaction and activities that your infant's behavior is identifying.

Infants will always be held during feeding and bottles will never be propped unless capable of holding bottles on their own. Infants will not be fed any solid foods out of the bottles.

Routines are the curriculum for your infant's day. Every moment of a young child's day offers opportunities for learning. Your caregiver catches these moments and helps each baby establish trust, discover, and feel good about him/herself. In addition, your caregiver helps your child to tackle motor skills, realize the power of language, and begin to understand this new world from many angles. This task is accomplished as your caregiver keys into the verbal and nonverbal messages that your child is sending.

With the education and understanding of early childhood development, Center staff knows that rich verbal interactions with children help them to understand language as a tool for identifying and expressing their needs, ideas, and feelings later in life. Each of our caregivers understands that infants developmentally need to explore the world through touch and feel. This is viewed as a valuable learning experience. Your caregiver is alert to the need for proper sanitation measures and follows them consistently and conscientiously. As your trained caregiver looks at the environment, she/he views it from the child's perspective and creates an inviting and stimulating place for the child. The caregiver understands that a child's developmental status requires specific learning tools. The tools are put into rotation so that every toy/learning tool is utilized by each baby to enhance the needs of your growing child. The caregiver observes the child to focus on your child's interests or needs.

Infants need to view the world from many angles. This includes crawling, being carried, stroller rides, climbing, and rocking so that various perspectives are gained. Diaper changing, feeding, and other routines are viewed as times for communication, self-discovery, and socializing. They are encouraged to master feeding despite the messiness that accompanies the activity. Parents are the best resource in deciding the child's needs and you will work closely with your primary caregivers to make the best decisions for your child's development.

Note: We kindly ask you to put on provided disposable booties at the door over your shoes. Our infants spend a lot of time on the floor and we need to keep the floor as clean as possible to ensure the health and safety of our infants.

INFANT BOTTLE POLICY

We provide a house formula at each school (please see the director for the brand for your school).. We will always have this on hand but you are more than welcome to bring your own. Please be sure that formula is brought in a factory sealed container or pre-filled in a bottle. The teachers or director will ensure proper mixing according to the manufacturer's label, warning, and storing of bottles in the kitchen. All children's bottles will be labeled with the child's name and date. After

each feeding any remaining milk will be discarded. Sanitizing of bottles will strictly be done in the kitchen.

BABY SIGN LANGUAGE

Sometimes it is hard to understand what babies and toddlers want/need. We will be using baby sign language to help communicate with the babies. Simple signs like “more”; “please”, and “all done” will be used most often. These especially help with meal times. Our educators will help the babies sign it but believe it or not, they catch on fast! We usually start it right around the time that infants are starting table food.

TODDLER PROGRAM

Teachers understand that children learn more by doing than by being told. Toddlers discover their world on a physical level. They are expected to walk, climb, carry objects, clean up toys, and dump or drop things rather than just sitting at tables.

In planning for your toddler, our educators are prepared to be flexible and spontaneous. Because they are active explorers, toddlers are eager to try new things and use materials in different ways. Our understanding educators will go with the cues of the child and extend the learning when necessary.

Toddlers are working on becoming autonomous. The teacher respects this and allows opportunities for the child to be responsible and make choices. Expectations for behaviors are developmentally appropriate and allow the child to be challenged yet to feel support from the teacher.

Our educators, with patience, warmth and respect, redirect toddlers to help guide them toward controlling their impulse and behaviors. Constant testing and expression of opposition are viewed as the child's development of a healthy sense of self. The teacher views herself as a model for how she wants the children to develop.

The teacher recognizes that routine times are important moments to help children learn about themselves and others. Our staff views playtime as valuable, and facilitates this so that children stay interested and move from simple to more complex aspects of play. The classroom includes materials for children to engage in imaginative play, appropriate experiences for creative exploration, various manipulatives to develop cognitive and physical skills as well as building blocks, music, and books. The environment allows the children to choose activities and respects their need for ample time to use and reuse learning tools. This fosters competence within the children. The setting is stimulating and inviting. It offers comfortable spaces for privacy and for interacting in small groups. Children are encouraged by an adult to care for the belongings and the environment in ways they can handle. The educator creates and adapts the environment and activities to meet the children's changing needs from day to day.

TOILET TRAINING AND DIAPERING PROCEDURES

We check and evaluate children upon entry for soiled diapers or any type of rash or irregularity in the diapering region. We check and change diapers every two hours or as needed. The diapering activities are recorded on your Daily Report in each room.

After each use the diaper changing area is disinfected. Dirty/soiled diapers are immediately disposed of in the appropriate lined diaper pail. After each diaper change and toileting task, hands are washed with antibacterial soap and water. In the event that sinks access is unavailable (picnic, parks etc.) a hand sanitizer is used. All children using the toilet are required to wash their hands with antibacterial soap and water after each use. Stepping stools and assistance is provided if needed. If a child requires a potty seat, it too will be cleaned and disinfected after each use.

POTTY TRAINING

If a parent feels that his/her child is ready to be potty trained, the parent should discuss the matter with your child's teachers. Your child's caregivers and administration will evaluate your child. The evaluation consists of looking for signs of your child's readiness. Examples of readiness include being able to dress and undress with ease, balance on a step stool to wash hands, and clean their bottom with tissue without assistance. We will work together to ensure that this process is as easy and successful for your child and your family as possible. It is important for parents to remember that sometimes using the potty at home and using the potty at school is different. Potty training should be a natural experience, not a forced experience.

REST/NAP TIME

Infants will sleep whenever they need to throughout the day and will remain on their own schedule. Young toddlers will nap on a schedule everyday following lunch. For older toddlers, a nap or quiet time is scheduled after lunch. The teachers are available to rub backs and generally maintain the restful atmosphere. Children, who do not sleep after 1 hour and those who are up before naptime is over, are permitted to quietly look at books or engage in quiet projects while the other children sleep.

CUBBIES

Cubbies are provided for each child and are marked with the child's name. It is important that you check each day for artwork, notes from the teacher or director, personal items, etc. Classrooms also have 'Take Home' folders that you will need to check on the regular

LABELING

Please label all clothing that is extra or removable with your child's name. This is very important for the teacher to determine ownership of the item. It is also important in helping your child learn to take care of his/her belongings.

OUTSIDE TOYS

If your child has an attachment with a certain toy or stuffed animal that he/she may need at rest-time, please inform the director upon enrollment of your child. If the child wishes to play with the toy throughout the day, the child must be willing to share it. If the child refuses to share, then it will go into the child's cubby for the rest of the day.

SUNSCREEN APPLICATION

It is recommended that all children bring sunscreen during the summer months. An authorization form is required to apply sunscreen; these forms must be filled out for each individual child and each item separately. Sunscreen can only be used by the child who brought in the protective spray, lotion, or oil. There will be no sharing of sunscreen and no application of sunscreen without a signed form. Teachers will apply sunscreen to children 15 - 20 minutes prior to going outdoors and will be reapplied as needed. Sunscreen will need to be provided for children during the months of May - September. Colored sunscreen is not permitted.

SMOKING

Smoking is NOT permitted in the building or parking lot. For the safety of our children, please do not toss cigarette or cigar butts on the ground. Thank you for your consideration.

CONFIDENTIALITY

CONFIDENTIALITY

We will respect all children and their parents/legal guardians with strict confidentiality. We respect the privacy of our families and hold all information confidential. All staff are trained on confidentiality guidelines during their new hire orientation. What happens at our school will stay here, unless it conflicts with any of our mandatory reporting.

CHANGING POLICIES & PROCEDURES

We hold the right to change and or edit any policy/procedure at any time. These changes or edits will be submitted to the State Licensor and each parent/guardian will receive a revised copy of the new policy/procedure. We will also report any changes of circumstances which may affect the ability to comply with licensing standards such as new location of program,

renovations/remodeling of building, suspected in-house child abuse/neglect, household composition change, ownership change or new Director.

ADDITIONAL PARENT RESOURCES

WHAT SHOULD I BRING MY CHILD - SUPPLIES NEEDED?

Please dress your child in comfortable, simple clothing. When dressing your child, remember that your child will be engaged in finger-painting, outdoor play, sand/water play, etc., so dress them accordingly and be aware that **your child may get dirty while playing**. Teachers and smocks will of course help keep them clean but it is never a guarantee. Independence is encouraged when playing and using the restroom so please make sure your child is able to pull down their pants on their own to use the restroom.

Please clearly label all clothing, shoes, scarves, mittens, hats, etc. with your child's name.

- Infants: 3 or more bottles labeled with the child's name (on all pieces), 2 pacifiers (if needed) labeled with the child's name, 3 undershirts, shirts, pants, socks, labeled blanket, disposable wipes, and diapers. Anything you would like your child to have while here, please feel free to bring it. Some limitations may apply due to licensing but we will tell you if a concern comes up. Please also feel free to ask questions at any time.
- Toddlers: 2 pacifiers (if needed; we will try to limit the pacifiers to just have a nap time unless needed otherwise) labeled with the child's name, 3 undershirts, shirts, pants, socks, labeled blanket, disposable wipes, diapers, or pull-ups (potty training). Anything you would like your child to have for nap time, please feel free to bring it. Some limitations may apply due to licensing but we will tell you if a concern comes up. Please also feel free to ask questions at any time.

BITING

There are many different reasons why children bite. The child could be trying to relieve pain from teething, be exploring cause and effect, experience the sensation of biting, satisfy a need of oral-motor stimulation, act in self-defense, or communicate feelings of frustration or anger.

How a biting incident will be handled:

- The teacher will immediately rush over to the incident and get down to the children's level
- A firm "You do not bite your friends!" will be said
- The focus will be on the victim of the bite giving first aid immediately
- The child that bit will be asked to show the other child gentleness (if they do not have the language skills to talk it out) Otherwise, they will have to ask the victim if they are okay. If the child responses no, they need to ask what will make the child feel better (whether it be a hug, a high five or fist bump: just something to show that the child is sorry rather than just forcing the child to say sorry)
- The teacher will defuse the situation and remove the child who distributed the bite and redirect him/her to a different activity

- A cold chewie may be offered or the child may be asked to take a break from the area and read a book or do a puzzle instead

Biting and other physical injuries caused by one child to another or by a child to a teacher or director are causes for concern and must be documented. When your child causes an injury to another student or teacher, an incident report will be completed detailing the injury. The incident report becomes a part of the school's permanent record and a copy will be put in your child's file. If biting becomes a persistent problem, your child will be shadowed. What this means is we will have a staff member be at the child's side or even hold their hand throughout the entire day. That way, if the child even comes close to biting another child, it will be stopped immediately.

If your child receives a total of five incident reports because they have been involved in an incident, which caused injury to another child or teacher, a mandatory meeting will be required with the Parents, Teachers and Directors. At this meeting a plan of action will be discussed so that both the parents and the teachers can seek a consistent way to handle the situation and hopefully remedy the behavior.

If after the meeting nothing changes and another five incident reports are completed (totaling ten incident reports relating to a biting or injury), the family will be given a two-week notice and the family will be asked to make other arrangements for the child. Please note this will be handled case by case. The Center Director will determine severity.

We reserve the sole right to ask your child to leave the school immediately and permanently at any given time without two weeks' notice if the injury that is caused to another child, teacher or director is deemed extremely severe by the school Directors. In this case, the normal ten incident reports and the preceding protocol will not be possible and immediate dismissal from the program will occur.

CLASSROOM RATIOS

Age of Children Minimum Ratio of Staff to Children:

Illinois:

Ages of Children	Ratio
Infants (6wks - 15m)	1:4
Toddlers (15m - 24m)	1:5
Two Years (24m - 36m)	1:8
Preschool (3 years - 6 years)	1:10
School Age	1:20

Children of different age groups may be combined if the following guidelines are followed:

- Infants are never combined with children over the age of 18 months, except in certain circumstances (e.g., at open or close of The School, if children are siblings).
- Children 12 to 24 months may be combined in a classroom with children two years of age, if the ratio of 1 to 4 is maintained.
- Classrooms of children 2 years and older may be combined, with the ratio determined by the age of the majority of the children in the group.
- During naptime, at least one staff member shall be present in every room where children are sleeping and/or resting. Staff-to-child ratios can be reduced to one staff member per room where children are resting for a period not to exceed one hour. Staff should remain in The School so, if needed, they can assist in a classroom. (this does not pertain to infants/toddlers)

STAFF QUALIFICATIONS

Every employee we hire is qualified for the position and meets all state licensing guidelines. All employees will be screened for and will NOT have a substantiated report of child abuse or neglect. NO staff member or volunteer's name may be on the Sex Offender Registry.

Required for all employees:

- Child Abuse and Neglect (mandated reporting training will be completed within the ninety days of orientation) and:
- Continuing Education requirements as follows:
 - Full-time staff (over 30 hours) is required to have 20 hours per year
 - Part-time staff (under 30 hours) is required to have 10 hours per year

Within 90 days of hire:

- A current certificate of completion for Infant, Child and Adult CPR/First Aid/AED
- Completion of Orientation in the following topics: Prevention and Control of Infectious Diseases, Administration of Medications, Safe Sleep Practices and Reducing the Risk of SIDS, Building and Physical Premises Safety, Prevention and Response to Food Emergencies, Emergency Preparedness, Prevention of Shaken Baby Syndrome, Appropriate Precautions in Transporting Children, Safe Handling and Storage of Hazardous Materials, Child Development.

RECEIPT OF HANDBOOK

Confirmation of Understanding and Compliance with the school Parent/Legal Guardian Guidelines and Procedures/Policies.

I confirm that I have read and understand all Parent/Legal Guardian Guidelines and Procedures and Policies. By signing this confirmation, I am agreeing to comply with all procedures and policies. I also am aware that if at any time, I have questions or concerns regarding guidelines, procedures or policies I will address them with the Director.

Parent/Legal Guardian Name (Printed):

Parent/Legal Guardian Signature:

Date Signed: ____/____/____

APPENDIX A
 BEHAVIOR INTERVENTION PLAN

Individual Behavior Support Plan

Name: Age: Class:

The Behavior	Strategies	Process
	<p>Proactive:</p> <p>Reactive:</p>	<p>First time:</p> <p>_____</p> <p>_____ Redirect.</p> <p>Provide parent with an incident report.</p> <p>Second time: Call to home for early pick up. Incident report provided.</p> <p>Third time: Call to home for early pick up with additional 2 day suspension. Incident report provided.</p> <p>Fourth time: Disenrollment with 3 references for alternate schools. Incident report provided.</p>

Teacher Signature:

Date:

Director Signature:

Date:

Parent Signature:

Date: