



A Member of the Child Care Connection Inc. Family

Parent Handbook

For Rhode Island

www.childrensworkshop.com

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The Children's Workshop

Dear Families,

Welcome to The Children's Workshop early learning centers. The following is your copy of our parent's handbook.

You have entrusted us with your most precious gift – your child. We, in turn, have created a warm, caring, nurturing, educational environment in which your child can grow and learn. Our philosophy is your child's play is our adult work! Each child develops in his/her own time and space.

Every center has a staff comprised of qualified teachers, professionally trained directors and assistant directors, and caring, nurturing teaching assistants. Our corporate office is comprised of professionals who support the day-to-day, behind the scene, operations of our high-quality early learning centers.

All employees are ready and able to promote the well being of our children and their families, and their fellow colleagues. No matter where you find them, our employees provide the TLC and learning support that help children grow.

Open and honest communication is the key to a successful childcare experience. Please feel free to take advantage of our "Open Door" policy and discuss any concerns or suggestions you may have with your center's Director.

Thank you for the part you play in making your child's experience with us a success.

*Kevin A. Fusco
President & CEO*

Our Mission Statement

A devoted team of professionals creating fun learning environments, peace of mind, and flexibility for our families...because we care.

Introduction

Welcome

New beginnings are exciting for children, their parents and teachers. We are committed to helping you make an easy, comfortable transition into our program by clearly communicating our policies, procedures and philosophy. We hope these guidelines help your initial orientation to the center and serve as a handy reference throughout your child's enrollment.

We know from experience that we cannot provide care and learning for children unless it takes place within the context of their family. In order to do so, we need your insights, your personal involvement, and both a personal and professional relationship with you. Together, we make an excellent team.

The Children's Workshop prides itself in providing children and their families with high quality care and education throughout Rhode Island and Massachusetts. We are committed to providing excellence in education for infants through school age children. We opened our first center in 1990 in Lincoln, Rhode Island and are growing steadily.

We are a young company, run by parents with children of their own. We strive every day to address the needs of the children and families in our care. Our main objective is to ensure excellent programs, dedicated educators and classrooms that are comfortable. We invite you to learn more about our programs and to become part of our family where "learning is child's play"!

The Children's Workshop are licensed by the Department of Children, Youth and Families, and the Rhode Island Department of Education.

State regulations are available in the Director's office for review.

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Statement of Philosophy

Our main goal is to provide our town and surrounding communities with the highest quality childcare and early educational services in a safe, clean, diverse and friendly environment designed to best meet the needs of the children.

Our program philosophy is based on the concept of developmentally appropriate practice and we use the "Creative Curriculum" which is a nationally recognized curriculum for young children. We are committed to providing experiences, which will aid in the cognitive, physical, social, emotional, and language development of each child. An atmosphere will be created to encourage children to learn through discovery, providing care with concern for each individual child's needs, interests, and ability level. Each child's developmental progress is fostered as he or she is guided through a program filled with stimulating learning centers and creative activities. All areas of growth and development are provided for. Curiosity, exploration and sharing are encouraged. Accomplishments and creativity are nurtured and praised.

An integral and highly significant aspect of our philosophy is the importance of open communication between the center and family. The child's parent/guardian and family members are the most significant people in a child's life. Therefore, building a positive, communicative relationship with each family is of the utmost importance. Mutual respect and cooperation between the adults in a child's life is essential in order for him or her to develop trust in the world. Parents are asked to share relevant information pertaining to their child with the child's caregiver and vice versa in order to establish a mutually supportive relationship. This ultimately allows for the most positive experience for everyone – children, families and staff members.

Above all, we aim to provide a warm, safe, loving, educational environment where children feel welcome, secure and nurtured while in our care.

Our Goals for Children:

1. Develop a sense of trust in their environment and those who care for them.
2. Develop a growing sense of autonomy and initiative.
3. Develop confidence and strong self-esteem.
4. Develop a love for learning and exploration.
5. Develop and demonstrate pro-social behaviors such as cooperation, a respect for diversity, and caring for their environment and those around us.
6. Acquire learning and problem solving skills.
7. Expand logical thinking skills.
8. Expand verbal communication skills.

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Equal Opportunity and Non-Discrimination

TCW provide quality educational services to children from infants through school age. We are firmly committed to the concepts and practices of equal opportunity and non-discrimination.

We administer our programs for children and our employment practices without regard to race, gender, religion, age, cultural heritage, marital status, sexual orientation, political belief, veteran status, national origin, disability, toilet training status, or any other characteristic protected by Federal, State or local law.

Supporting equal opportunity goes beyond our obligation to the law. We work toward the cooperation of everyone to achieve a constructive learning and working environment for all. Discrimination or harassment in any form will not be tolerated. We are responsible for upholding this policy, which simply stated, requires that we treat each other with respect at all times.

Classroom Staff

Children thrive when their teachers are deeply interested and committed to each of them. Our teachers enjoy working with children and parents to create a warm and consistent environment. The teachers act as facilitators of learning and respect the idea that each child participates in the process of learning in their own unique way.

We have carefully selected our team of staff, not only because of their knowledge and experience in the field of early childhood education, but also because their personal educational philosophy and teaching style is compatible with our approach. Each staff member meets or exceeds the qualifications set by state laws and completes a full orientation program when hired.

TCW also recognize that learning is a life-long process for children, as well as adults. Our teachers are offered continual opportunities throughout their employment to further their education and improve their teaching skills. We offer in-service training at each center, company-wide workshops and seminars, and tuition reimbursement for continuing their education courses. In addition, we encourage staff to participate in professional organizations, such as the National Association for the Education of Young Children, and to become involved in the local early childhood community.

Getting Started

The Enrollment Process

The choice you make about your child's early care and education is one of the most important decisions you will ever make. Our enrollment process is designed to allow you time to visit, to ask questions, to observe your child at play in his/her prospective classroom, and to assess whether your expectations and our programs are a good "fit".

Once the decision to enroll has been made, parents will need to submit all enrollment forms supplied by the Director, including physical and current immunization records. These records must be updated annually. All records must be provided prior to your child's start date. Please be sure to notify us when your child's information changes. Keeping your children's records up-to-date helps to insure that you can be reached in the event of an emergency.

If your child has an identified special need, the Director may request that you provide additional information for the responsible school district, Early Intervention program or health service provider that has already worked with your child. The Director will then meet with you to review the information and identify any necessary program accommodations. The Director must then consider the nature and cost of these accommodations, whether suitable funding is available, the effect of the accommodations on the center's resources and any other impact on the center. If the accommodations are determined to be reasonable, your child will be accepted and the center will work with your family and any other service providers involved to develop and individualized plan that incorporates the center's services. If the accommodations represent an undue burden to the center, your child will not be enrolled. You will receive a detailed written explanation that includes the appeals process. This process will be completed within 30 days.

Your Child's First Day

We are very excited that you have selected us for your child's early care and education. Prior to your child's day, we look forward to you and your child visiting his/her new classroom. Please arrange these visits with your Center Director and/or classroom teacher. If it seems that extra time and help in making the transition are needed, we can create a plan that is in the best interest of your child.

Children react differently to new situations. On your child's first day, he or she may cry when you leave. In most cases, the tears will end as soon as you leave. You are encouraged to call during the day to check on your child and see how his/her day is going. Our staff is experienced in helping your child make the transition. Before you know it, your child will look forward to fun filled days with us.

The best way to prepare your child for this new school experience is to:

- Talk about school and new friends

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- Drive by the school building and playground to familiarize your child to the surroundings.
- Work together to organize items he/she will bring to school (i.e. favorite backpack, rest item, etc.)
- Display positive feelings about the coming experience

This will help your child enter school with confidence and enthusiasm. Bringing a familiar object from home helps some children. Whether your child is starting school for the first time or is familiar with a childcare center environment, you are welcome and encouraged to spend time with your child in the classroom. Plan on visiting the center with your child before the first day of school.

Children need to trust that you are coming back. If you are anxious and in a hurry, your child will sense it and have a more difficult time letting go. A relaxed and unhurried parent means a relaxed and unhurried separation for the child.

When you are ready to leave, it is important that you say goodbye to your child. Do not try to busy your child in order to sneak out. Your child needs to trust that you will not leave without saying goodbye. It is equally important to tell the teacher when you are leaving so that she/he can stand by and help in the separation process.

With this in mind, we are confident the first day will be happy and smooth for the children, parents, and teachers.

Two Steps Forward, One Step Back

There is a common occurrence with young children which can be less of a problem if the parents are forewarned. Your child may be blissfully happy for the first few days. Then, out of the blue, announces, "I am not going". One reaction is to think that something negative has happened at the center.

This is not normally the case. The child is coming to realize that attending will be an everyday fact---not a novelty. Even though your child wants to be "big", leaving home everyday requires an emotional adjustment and acceptance.

The majority of children do not face this difficulty. For those that do, we can plan for a gradual adjustment, based on the needs of the child. Before you know it, the center will be a "home-away-from-home" and attendance will be eagerly anticipated.

Daily Routines

Arrivals and Departures

When you arrive at the center with your child, it is very important that you accompany him or her directly to the classroom. In addition, we request that you sign them in and out of the center each day. Please arrive and depart at the times contracted for in your Enrollment Contract. Our employee schedules are based on the number of children who are in each class hourly. Child employee ratios must be maintained at all times to insure compliance of state regulations. We will maintain a child/employee ratio equal to or better than that required by the State child care license regulations. If you need to change your contracted hours, please see the Director.

If your child is going to be absent due to illness or a personal reason, please notify the center as early as possible. There are no rate reductions due to absences. Your weekly fee will remain the same.

If you are going to be late picking up, please contact the center to make the necessary arrangements with regards to your emergency pick-up person.

Other than parents, only persons listed as authorized substitutes will be allowed to pick up a child. They will be asked to present a photo ID upon arrival. Children may only leave the center with an authorized adult. We do not accept verbal authorization for pick-up of children.

When parents enroll, they are informed of our policies concerning custody disputes. Unless a copy of a Court Order granting custody to only one parent is on file, we do not have the legal authority to refuse parental pick-up. If a non-custodial parent does attempt to pick-up a child, the center will refuse by citing that we are obeying a Court Order. Always refer these matters to the Director.

Parent Involvement

You are your child's first and primary teacher. We will work with you to create a relationship with the best interests of your child at the heart of that relationship. Parents are free to visit at any time while their child is in attendance.

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Communication

We strive to make our centers a place that is warm and cozy, a place of growth, challenge and friendships. Although we schedule formal times for discussions between parents and staff, we hope you will speak to us daily to keep us informed about the small but important changes that can affect your child's ongoing development. Our goal is to establish an ongoing dialogue with your family.

In our younger programs, all of your child's daily routines will be recorded on a daily sheet if requested as well as interactions that your child enjoyed throughout his or her day. We also encourage conversations to happen during your drop off and pick up times with your child's teachers.

We will also be documenting your child's development through regular progress reports. Individualized written progress reports are prepared for each child in the program every 6 months except for infants and children with identified special needs for which progress reports are prepared every 3 months. You are then given an opportunity to meet with your child's teacher to review your child's progress and to establish specific goals to further your child's growth and development. Any significant developments or specific concerns will be shared with you as soon as they arise.

In addition to routinely scheduled conferences, staff are always made available for individual conferences at the parents' request, with reasonable notice. You are also encouraged to visit and to join in program activities at any time while your child is present.

Clothing and Diapers

Each child must have a weather appropriate extra set of clothes in the event that a child needs to change. Parents are responsible for taking soiled clothing home at the end of their child's day. All the items must be clearly labeled by the parents with the child's full name. We are not responsible for lost or misplaced articles. During the summer season, please also provide a bathing suit, towel, and water shoes.

All children should wear comfortable clothes that do not inhibit physical activity or messy art projects. Children should wear sneakers or rubber soled shoes that are safe for climbing and running. All children need an extra set of clothes at school including: socks, shirt, underwear, pants, shorts, jacket or sweater.

1. For children who still wear diapers, parents need to provide a weekly supply of diapers and diaper wipes.
2. Please label all clothing. We cannot be responsible for unlabeled clothes.
3. For children being toilet trained, we ask that you send in extra clothes and an adequate supply of underwear. All soiled clothes will be placed in a plastic bag for you to take home.

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Toilet Learning

Toilet learning can be a challenging developmental phase and our goal is to work together with you on this process. Once you let us know that you have started toilet learning at home, we will work with you to make this consistent with what is happening at school. If you are thinking about starting the process but are unsure of where to begin, please see your Center Director for resources on this topic.

Children who are learning to be self-sufficient in the bathroom will have an easier time if they wear clothing that they can pull off and on by themselves. Parents of children who are toilet training will receive daily communication regarding their child's toileting process.

Toys

The program you have chosen will engage and excite your child. We will provide challenging & stimulating toys for your child to play with everyday. Although a small "snuggly" for naptime is welcome, we ask that children do not bring other toys from home. Please keep in mind that children's personal storage space is limited. Teachers may help children to be careful with their belongings, but they cannot be responsible for damage. Please talk with your child's teacher to see if the classroom has a "show and tell" day for home toys.

Rest Period

Your child will be an active and engaged learner while in the center. These busy days will tire out young children. Therefore, we will provide an established rest time for the children in conjunction with state requirements. Toddlers and preschoolers sleep on cots. If your center supplies bedding, we will provide all appropriate linens. If you are required to supply your child's bedding, please bring a crib sheet and blanket. Bedding items must be brought home weekly for laundering. If your child does not nap, we will provide quiet activities during rest period. School age children will not nap but there will be a quiet activity period.

Infants that are 12 months or younger will sleep in cribs. Our policy dictates that staff place all infants on their backs for nap. Any other position requires a note from your Health Care Professional. Also, no additional items can be put in a crib without a doctor's note.

Food/Snacks/Lunches

The Children's Workshop provides breakfast, lunch and afternoon snacks in most centers. At these centers, a catering company provides hot lunch. A menu will be distributed to families a monthly basis. In some centers, we provide morning and afternoon snacks and you are responsible for providing your child's lunch. Please provide a nutritious lunch. Soda and candy are not allowed. In all centers, we provide a morning and afternoon snack. If you are providing a lunch for your child, please do not

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send anything with peanut butter. The Children's Workshop centers are peanut butter free due to many children with peanut allergies.

Infant Food Preparation

Your infant will follow the individualized daily schedule that you share with us. To follow this schedule for your child; please prepare the appropriate amount of formula or food each day labeled with your child's full name. The first bottle feeding should be given at home. Bottles must be pre-mixed and all food and bottles that are brought in must be labeled with your child's first and last name. If your child is using a sippy cup, a daily supply is needed. If your center supplies formula, please provide several clean bottles labeled with your child's name each day. All unused food and bottles will be sent home with you and your child at the end of the day.

Nursing mothers are welcome to visit their infants at any time of the day. If you are supplying breast milk in bottles, that must be written on the bottle.

When your baby reaches approximately six or seven months of age, he/she may start with finger foods. This allows your child to gain independence and begins to develop fine motor control (finger/thumb).

When your child reaches approximately ten to twelve months of age, please talk to the Director or Infant Lead Teacher to discuss weaning your child from a bottle to a sippy cup. Before any food changes are made for children, The Children's Workshop recommends that you first consult your pediatrician.

Special Snacks

If parents wish to send in a special treat for their child's classroom (i.e. birthday cake), please ask the Director for the guidelines in advance. We welcome commercially prepared items with the ingredient list on the package.

Holiday Celebrations

The children in our centers represent many different religious and ethnic groups. The folklore and traditions of each are an important part of our collective culture. While our curriculum incorporates the interests and experiences of the children, we do not emphasize religious themes or one particular tradition. We do, however, welcome your participation and ideas. Parents are encouraged to visit the classroom to share their own traditions and customs.

Weather & Related Closings

In the rare event of severe weather, the center will open, and remain open, as long as conditions allow. Please call the center before coming when weather is extreme or conditions are dangerous. The Center Director will have a complete list of radio stations and/or TV stations that will carry our announcements.

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If weather or road conditions worsen during the day, parents may be asked to pick up children for early closing. You will be notified in this case by the center. Please be sure to leave an emergency number with the center whenever you cannot be reached at your usual telephone number. It is absolutely necessary that either you or another adult properly designated by you be reachable at all times that your child is in the center.

Transportation

Parents are responsible for providing transportation to and from the center on a daily basis. In some school age programs, the Area School District will provide transportation.

In some centers, TCW is responsible for school transportation via our vans or buses. If a child is absent from school due to illness or other circumstances and will not be picked up, the parent/guardian is responsible for notifying us. If notification is not made, the bus/van driver must then determine where the child is before leaving the school. This situation can create unnecessary hardship for the driver and can cause a delay in the arrival time at other schools. A graduated charge schedule has been established to be billed in these circumstances. Please refer to the Tuition/Policy sheet for more detail.

In the event of a serious injury or illness, a child will be transported to the nearest/designated hospital by the responding emergency services team. A member of the staff will accompany the child, bringing the necessary paperwork from the child's file. The staff person will stay with the child until a parent arrives.

Field Trips

The Preschool, Kindergarten and School Age students will take occasional field trips. Parental notification and a permission slip will be given to each eligible child. Children must be four years old to attend. Transportation will be provided by a bus and/or van service. A first aid kit and emergency contact numbers for all children will be in the vehicle. Field trip attendance is not mandatory. If you would prefer that your child not attend, please let the Director know.

The Children's Workshop welcomes a limited number of parents to chaperone the children on trips. It may be necessary in some situations for a parent to accompany his/her child on a field trip. The Director will contact the parents if this need arises. We reserve the right to decline a student's attendance to field trips for the safety of the child. Parents will be notified of this decision in advance.

Keeping Children Safe & Healthy

We strive to maintain the health and safety of all children enrolled in our programs. We have detailed several important policies below. Please see your Center Director if you have any specific questions or would like to see a complete copy of the Health & Safety Policies, which is located in the Director's Office.

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Managing Children's Behavior

Guidance and discipline should always be developmentally appropriate and based on an understanding of the individual needs of each child. Our goal is to enhance and reinforce the healthy growth and development of each child and to maintain a protective environment for the group and the individuals within it. Children who are treated with fair and consistent limits feel safe and tend to be cooperative. As they grow, children learn to better express their feelings and needs. Positive and clear expectations, individual attention and acknowledgment of positive behaviors work wonders. But, of course there are times when conflict will arise.

Whenever possible, children are encouraged to resolve conflicts and identify appropriate solutions for themselves. An observant teacher will recognize when intervention is needed and will redirect the children involved to another activity. In doing so, the teacher will discuss the behavior with the children and restate the desired behavior, age permitting. In order to help children gain a better understanding of the desired behavior, the consequences of the inappropriate behavior will always be directly related to the actions of the child (i.e., putting away materials that have been misused or repairing a book that was intentionally torn). Forcing a child to apologize to another child is not effective and does not validate the feelings of either child involved.

When redirection is ineffective or when the difficult behavior is extreme or puts any child or teacher at risk, teachers may ask the director for assistance. Although it is important to allow children to express their anger in effective ways, keeping everyone safe is the first priority. Occasionally, a brief, supervised separation from the rest of the group can help a child to regain control. In order to be effective however, it is essential that the adults involved remain calm. These interventions will not be overused or used in a shameful or punitive way. Children who are frequently singled out or isolated often think badly of themselves and can enter a spiral of negative reinforcement.

This philosophy is consistent for children of all ages. Specific interventions are adjusted to match the developmental and understanding levels of the children. When appropriate and feasible, children will participate in the establishment of classroom rules, policies and procedures.

There are some specific types of disciplinary intervention that are strictly prohibited by The Children's Workshop policy:

- *Spanking and all other forms of corporal punishment are not used.*
- *No child is subjected to severe punishment, such as humiliation, verbal or physical abuse, neglect or abusive treatment.*
- *Food is not denied as a form of punishment or behavior control*
- *Children will not be force-fed.*
- *Children are not punished for not using a toilet, for toileting accidents, or for wetting or soiling clothing*
- *Children will not be forced to remain in soiled clothing or forced to remain on the toilet for an unreasonable amount of time.*

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Allergies

If your child has an allergy, please inform the Center Director upon enrolling. We will be happy to work out an individual health care plan for your child. Please keep all relevant medications and written Physicians orders current at the center.

Good Health

Only children who are in good health may be brought to the center. When a child develops signs of illness during the day, parents will be called and will be expected to pick up their child as soon as possible. In the meantime, the child will be made comfortable in a quiet, supervised location away from other children.

Children in all programs will play outdoors daily, weather permitting. Parents are responsible for sending children in adequate clothing and footwear to maintain good health during outdoor play in all suitable weather conditions, including normal winter temperatures. Please do not ask us to keep a child inside because of a cold or other illness. A child who is too sick to go outside is usually too sick to be in a social situation with other children.

Illness

Parents must understand that any new social setting offers exposure to illnesses and germs. Although teachers take precautions to prevent the spread of illness, children entering a new child care setting may seem to catch everything that goes around for several months. Please make arrangements for your child to stay home when they are ill. Children who are lethargic and unable to participate will not be allowed to stay in the center. To ensure that our environment remains safe for your child and all children, we ask that your child remain home when he or she is sick. If your child develops signs of illness at the center, we will call you and ask you to pick up your child.

If your child has experienced any of the following symptoms in the previous 24 hours, you will need to make other childcare arrangements:

1. A fever of 100—Children sent home with a fever cannot return to childcare until they have been fever free for 24 hours.
2. Diarrhea—2 or more instances within a close time frame will be assumed to be contagious unless determined otherwise by a doctor.
3. Vomiting
4. A contagious condition of any kind, including but not limited to strep, flu, respiratory infection, conjunctivitis, infectious rash, hepatitis, chicken pox, measles, mumps, scabies, lice, etc. unless a physician's note indicates the child may return.
5. Pronounced or persistent coughing

Medications

If your child is on medication that needs to be administered during the center's hours, a parent must sign a "Medical Authorization" form. All medication must be handed directly to the staff member in charge. Do not leave medication in your child's backpack.

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All medication must be in the original bottle. If the medication is prescription medication, the bottle must have the pharmacy's and physician's name clearly shown, as well as, the child's name. Inclusive dates on the bottle must be current. Siblings cannot share medicines.

If your child has a special medication such as a nebulizer, please see your Director. We will not administer expired medication.

Administration of medication

Non-prescription medications will be administered if warranted with written permission from the child's physician, with the exception of topical medication. The medication must be in its original container with the label/prescription attached and must be provided by the parent. An authorization form must be completed and signed by the parent for all medication (*including topical treatments*). A standing order for non-prescription medication is valid for one calendar year. A new form must be completed each January.

Prescription medications will only be administered when delivered to the Director in the current prescription container, labeled by the pharmacist with the child's name, physician's name, medication name and dosage instructions. The center must have a Medication Permission Form with specific instruction for administration, including the time frame and possible allergic reactions and side effects. The first dosage daily must be given at home.

If possible all medication dosages should be given at home. Please try to limit the occasions where our staff is dispensing medications.

The initial dosage of any medication, whether prescription or non-prescription, must be given at home in order to evaluate the effectiveness and observe the child for possible side effects. We recommend that the child not return until they have completed two doses of the medication.

Parents who want their child to wear sunscreen must apply it each morning. Teachers will reapply it prior to going out in the afternoon. Parents may supply their own sunscreen or use the center-provided sunscreen. Permission slips must be signed for either type. Parents of infants should check with their pediatrician prior to applying any sunscreen.

Children with special needs or chronic conditions will be assessed individually in consultation with the parents and physician. Such special needs would include, but not be limited to, the use of inhalers, insulin, Phenobarbital or Dilantin.

All medications must be handed directly to a teacher. Medication cannot be mixed with food or drink unless directed by the physician in writing. The center is not responsible for spilled or expired medication.

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All medication must be clearly labeled with the child's name. Prescription and non-prescription medications will be stored out of reach of the children. Topical medication is also stored in an area that is inaccessible to children.

The person administering the medication must know the child and be precise when measuring each dosage. A second staff person will verify all aspects of the transaction. Both staff members will initial the form immediately. Any question regarding the dosage must immediately be referred to the physician for confirmation. The parent must provide the dropper or calibrated cup used in administering the medication. Some tablets may need to be crushed per the order of the physician.

The parent will be called if we are unable to administer the medication due to the child being upset or agitated. A child will never be restrained.

Accidents and Emergencies

Keeping your child and all children safe is our priority. All staff are trained in first aid, and CPR for infants and children. Minor accidents, such as cuts and scrapes, will be treated with soap and water; bruises and bumps treated with ice. All incidents and injuries will be reported to parents on an Incident/Accident Report Form within 24 hours. In the case of a more serious accidental injury, when we feel that medical attention is needed, we will call you or your designated contact. If necessary we will contact 911 and summon an ambulance. A staff member will accompany your child in the ambulance to a hospital and remain with your child until you arrive.

Car Seat Information

Please be sure to follow all state guidelines regarding proper car seat usage. Seats and positions vary according to the child's height and weight. Your local police can assist you with any questions.

Child Protection Mandate

In order to grow and learn, a child's basic needs for good nutrition, shelter, medical care, cleanliness, appropriate discipline, love and self-esteem must be met. Children need a safe, nurturing environment that makes them feel secure and loved. Our commitment is to provide the best possible environment to support your child's healthy development. To help assist us in this endeavor, we ask that you keep us informed about any outside situations that will affect your child.

If you are having difficulty in providing for your child's needs, please speak with the Director. He/She can provide you with a list of outside resources that can provide you with additional support.

Our staff will cooperate in all state investigations. A copy of our policy is available in the Director's Office.

Families' Rights

Child and Adult Care Food Program

The Children's Workshop is a member of the Child and Adult Care Food Program (CACFP). A Meal Benefit application is on file for every child in the center. A new application is distributed every year for completion and/or when your family's income situation changes.

If you feel that you have been discriminated against, please call 202-720-5964 to file a complaint or write to USDA, Director, Office of Civil Rights, Room 326-W, Whiten Building, 1400 Independence Avenue, SW, Washington, and D. C, 20250-9410. The USDA is an equal opportunity provider and employer.

Children's Records

Information contained in a child's record is privileged and confidential. The Children's Workshop will not release the information in a child's record to anyone not directly involved in implementing the child's program plan without the written consent of the child's parents or guardian. Parents shall have access to their children's records at all times. Requests for copies will be provided within 2 business days. Occasionally, an authorized licenser will review the childrens' files to substantiate proper record keeping by the center. However, no material will be removed and confidentiality is always maintained.

A parent may add, delete or change information in the file at any time. If the Director feels that the information a parent wants deleted needs to remain, he/she will meet with the family to discuss the issue. The parents will be given written instructions on the appeals process.

Confidentiality

We believe in protecting the confidentiality of all families who choose to use our services. We will not discuss one family with another without prior mutual consent nor will we release family information to parties outside the center or to the general public. Staff members cannot discuss the children or families at any time. We hope that all families will follow the same principles of confidentiality with respect to the children, families and staff.

Community Agency Involvement

TCW will permit no research, experimentation or promotions using the children without first obtaining written permission from the parents. This includes academic research, vision or hearing screening, or any other activities that are unrelated to the direct care of children.

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Conflict Resolution

We hope that all issues with regards to childcare will be decided based on what is in the best developmental interest of the child. Occasionally conflicts will arise between parents and the caregivers. The following steps are designed to help in the resolution of problems and disputes:

1. If you, at any time, have complaints, concerns or questions with regards to the care your child is receiving, please see the Director immediately.
2. If you feel that your situation has not been addressed to your satisfaction after speaking with the Director, you may call our Customer Service Representative at 401-334-0100, ext 244 or call the center's Regional Director of Operations. (Your center Director or Customer Service Rep. can provide you with contact information for your center's Regional Director.) We welcome your feedback and input.
3. If you are still not satisfied, you may contact DCYF.

Referral Procedure

The Director and teachers evaluate and monitor each child's development through observations and documentation. Records are confidential and access is limited. Parents have a right to review their child's file at any time.

If there is reason to be concerned about a development issue, our procedures for referral to an outside resource are listed below. If a child's behavior is such that it poses a safety risk, we reserve the right to suspend enrollment during the referral period or until the necessary steps have been taken to insure everyone's safety.

1. The teacher will notify the Director of the concerns
2. Teachers are responsible for recording information with regards to a child's behavior and development in an accurate and factual manner. Dates, times and durations are part of the process. The teachers will turn in all information to the Director for review
3. The Director may observe the child in the classroom for concurrence.
4. If applicable a meeting with the teachers, Director and the child's parents will be scheduled. A list of referrals for outside agencies will be given to the parents.
5. The parents will be asked to review all documentation regarding the center's concerns/observations. If the behaviors pose a safety concern, the child may be suspended pending services. The child's enrollment space will be held at no charge until the necessary services are in place. If the parent withdraws the child from the program in the interim, any deposits will not be refunded.
6. All parties will work together to develop an action plan to identify the needs of the child and offer any suggestions for behavioral intervention at home.
7. The action plan will include a specific timeline for meeting the established goals and follow-up meetings to review the program. Goal reevaluation will also be addressed at this time.

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8. With the parent's written consent, a liaison (usually the Director) will be designated to insure proper implementation of the plan. The liaison will also act as the center's primary contact between all participating parties.
9. If it is determined that the child does not require outside services or is ineligible, the center will monitor the child's progress every three months to determine if any additional referrals are necessary.
10. A copy of this plan and a record of each meeting will be placed in the child's file.

In an attempt to maintain the health and safety of the staff and other children within the center, the Director may make recommendations with respect to a child's plan that may appear to be in conflict with the above-mentioned procedures. The Director shall have the responsibility to terminate a child's enrollment in the center if she/he feels that the child's needs cannot be met without placing undue restrictions on others. In such an instance, the Director reserves the right to terminate the child's enrollment upon immediate written notification to the family.

Suspension and/or Termination

Reasons for Suspension and/or Termination

Although every effort will be made to avoid this step, the following situations may necessitate a temporary suspension or termination from the program:

- Parent's refusal to cooperate
- Physical or emotional problems that require constant one-on-one attention
- Severe behavioral problems that endanger the child or others
- Physical or emotional impairment that cannot be accommodated
- Continual late payment of tuition, failure to pay tuition or continual return of payments
- Failure to provide necessary health forms or other paperwork
- Behavior that is abusive, offensive or threatening to staff, children or other parents
- Under certain circumstances where safety concerns for the child and/or others are present, immediate termination may be necessary.

Under no circumstances will a child's enrollment be suspended:

- As a punishment
- To circumvent the referral process
- For any reason that is a violation of the ADA

Process for Suspension and/or Termination for Health and Safety Issues

Before a decision to terminate enrollment is made, not including tuition payment issues or continual late pick-up, the following steps will be taken:

1. Documentation as specified in the referral process will be prepared by the Director to be reviewed with the parents.
2. If the parents have solicited outside help with no discernable improvement in the child's behavior and the center cannot provide an appropriate environment, the parents will be given a list of other programs and two weeks notice in which to find alternative care.

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3. Under no circumstance will the child be treated differently from any other child within the program.
4. If the child's departure must be immediate and the opportunity to say good-bye is not given, the teacher will write a simple note to the child. Photos and drawings may be included.

Process for Suspension and/or Termination for Policy Non-Compliance Issues

In rare cases, it may become necessary for The Children's Workshop to consider the termination for reasons other than Health and Safety issues. Habitual non-compliance with policies is one example. The following procedure will be followed:

1. The parent will be notified by letter that termination is a possibility and the reasons. The parent will be asked to sign the letter, which will constitute the family's first formal notice. A meeting will ensue if so desired.
2. If the issue persists, the Director will schedule a meeting. The parent will be asked to sign a letter stating that services will be terminated the next time that the problem occurs. This is the family's final notice.
3. Refusal to sign the letter will be grounds for immediate termination.
4. If the problem occurs after the final notice, the family may be terminated.
5. In the event that the problem does not occur for a period of six (6) months, the issue will be considered resolved and the notice will no longer be valid.
6. If the problem reoccurs after this time period, the process must start again.
7. In the event of theft, endangerment of staff or children or other actions of this nature, the center reserves the right to terminate services immediately.

Tuition Policies

In our efforts to provide the highest quality of care for your child, we are continually improving our program. Part of this process is to review tuition rates annually. Tuition rates are center-specific. The following policies apply to all centers' Tuition Schedule.

Payment

Tuition is due by the close of business on Friday, in advance of the week of care to be received. A late fee will be added to the weekly tuition fee when not submitted on time. A non-refundable annual registration fee, specified on the Policy and Tuition sheet for the center, is required at your child's initial registration and for each subsequent school year they are enrolled.

Late Pick-Up Penalty

If a child is left at the center past normal closing time, a penalty per child will be charged for all age groups. Please see your centers Policy & Tuition sheets for specific information. If you are consistently late in picking up your child, you may be asked to secure other child care arrangements.

Returned Checks

If a check is returned, we will charge a return check fee to be included in the replacement payment. We reserve the right to refuse any other payments by check.

Non-Payment of Tuition

Non-payment or reoccurring late payment of fees can be sufficient cause for termination of service.

Holidays

Your child's center will be closed for scheduled holidays, which are listed in your center's Policy and Tuition sheets. Tuition is charged on a weekly basis, without credit for those holidays for which we are closed.

Vacation/Leave of Absence/Absence Due to Illness

You are responsible for payment of weekly tuition to maintain your child's space in the center, even when you choose not to use the center for care. Children removed from the active roster for non-payment of tuition will lose a guaranteed space, and a new registration fee will be required to re-enroll when space becomes available. Tuition is not refunded or credited for days missed due to illness.

When your child is going to be absent, please call the center as early as possible. If your child has a contagious illness, let us know so that we can alert other parents to look for symptoms in their children.

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Leaving the Program

If you choose to take your child out of our program, we require a two-week written notice. Any security deposit retained at the center will be applied to a child's last week of care.

Final Note

As you read through this handbook, we hope that many of your questions are answered. We hope you are as excited as we are about your child starting in our program. We have an exciting curriculum and new experiences for your child and your family to look forward to. The learning that occurs while they are in our care will be exceptional. We look forward to several years "where learning is child's play" for you and your family!