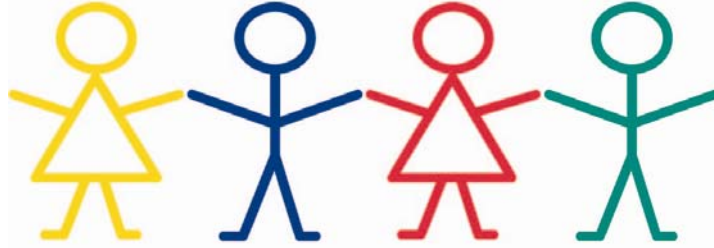


The Children's Workshop



Where Learning Is Child's Play®

Parent Handbook

For Massachusetts

www.childrensworkshop.com

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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 that your child's play is our adult work!

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 scenes operations of our high-quality early learning centers.

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

Open and honest communication is the key to a successful child care experience. Please feel free to take advantage of our "Open Door" policy, visit your child's classroom frequently, and discuss any concerns or suggestions you may have at any time with your child's teacher and your center's Director.

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

David B. MacDonald
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. At The Children's Workshop, 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, The Children's Workshop and your family 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 is licensed by the Department of Early Education and Care (EEC).

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

**To contact EEC directly regarding a program's regulatory compliance history:
1 Washington Street, Suite 20, Taunton MA 02780, (508) 828-5025**

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Statement of Philosophy

The main goal of The Children's Workshop is to provide our town and surrounding communities with the highest quality child care 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, The Children's Workshop, aims 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.

Equal Opportunity and Non-Discrimination

The Children's Workshop provides 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.

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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 The Children's Workshop approach. Each staff member meets or exceeds the qualifications set by state laws and completes a full orientation program when hired.

The Children's Workshop also recognizes 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 The Children's Workshop are a good "fit".

Once the decision to enroll has been made, parents will need to submit all enrollment forms supplied by the Director and current immunization and physical forms from the doctor. 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 of your child's information changes. Keeping your children's records up-to-date helps to ensure 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

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work with your family and any other service providers involved to develop an 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 The Children's Workshop 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 at The Children's Workshop.

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

- Talk about school and new friends
- 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. Some children are helped by bringing a familiar object from home (i.e. family pictures, teddy bear, blanket, etc.) Whether your child is starting school for the first time or is familiar with a child care 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.

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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. The Children's Workshop 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 Children's Workshop 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 for pick-up, please contact the center to make the necessary arrangements with regards to your emergency pick-up person. Other than parents, only persons with prior written authorization will be allowed to pick up a child. All 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 the The Children's Workshop 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.

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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. **We have an open door policy; parents are free to visit our schools at any time while their child is in attendance.**

We encourage you to join us whenever you can – here are a few suggestions for how you can get involved in your child's education:

- Volunteer to help for an hour or two in the classroom
- Volunteer to read to your child's class
- Visit the classroom as your child's "special visitor" and share with the class stories about your family and your child and perhaps some pictures too!
- Help prepare and serve daily snack
- Chaperone a field trip
- Ask your child's teacher if there are any materials or supplies they need for the classroom
- Ask your child's teacher if you can help prepare any materials for special projects (i.e. cutting out shapes or writing instructions for a craft, etc)
- Attend Parent Pleasers at the center (see below)
- Participate in your center's Parent Committee (see below)

Parent Pleasers

The Director and staff of the center will plan fun, family events from time to time that we like to call "Parent Pleasers!" Examples of past Parent Pleasers include ice cream socials, summer BBQs, Date Night Out (where we watch the kids so you can have a night off!) and Luaus. We are always looking for ways to make our families happy and to foster friendships among not just the children in our care but also their parents. If you have any suggestions for Parent Pleasers or center events please let your Director know!

Parent Committees

Each TCW Center has its own Parent Committee and we hope you will consider joining yours! The Parent Committee is open to all family members – parents, grandparents, aunts, uncles, etc – anyone who is a support system for the children enrolled in our center is welcome and encouraged to participate.

The TCW Parent Committees provide your family with a voice and a way to participate in and run family events and activities in the center. We encourage parents and family members to be involved in the child's classroom and to participate in family related workshops and events at the center. The Committees also provide an opportunity for families to meet each other, mingle, socialize, and form friendships and bonds that will last, hopefully even beyond your tenure at The Children's Workshop.

Parent Committees typically meet once per month, for about an hour, and children are welcome (we provide the child care!). The meeting agenda is parent directed but TCW staff attend so we can hear your ideas, suggestions and feedback. We also encourage the group to share parenting tips, advice and stories so that each family's support system grows with every meeting they attend.

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Please drop into one of our Parent Committee meetings and share your wonderful ideas with the group. It is very informal and the group shares a lot of information but more importantly, a lot of smiles and laughs. Ask your child's teacher or your Center Director for more information about upcoming meetings and events. We look forward to seeing you and your family at the next meeting!

Family Supports

We pride ourselves not only in providing your child's early learning education but also in including "wraparound" care for our families as well. This is done by making available supports to students and their families through our PBIS and PEP outreach program.

Positive Behavioral Interventions and Supports (PBIS)

The Children's Workshop is proud to feature a positive behavior support model called *The Children's Workshop Ways* in our schools. Workshop Ways is based on the Positive Behavior Intervention & Support initiative (PBIS), a nation-wide 3 tiered approach to understanding and resolving problem behavior in children. PBIS offers a holistic approach to developing an understanding for why children engage in problem behavior and strategies for preventing it both within early childhood centers and at home as well. Parent involvement and support is a huge part of the success of The Children's Workshop Ways. We have implemented Workshop Ways in all of our early learning centers. To learn more about PBIS, we encourage you to visit the website: www.pbis.org

Parent Feedback

We also ask our parents to complete an annual Program Evaluation but we welcome parent feedback, comments, concerns and compliments year round. Please don't hesitate to contact us at anytime. You can contact the home office at feedback@thechildrensworkshop.com or visit our website and we would be happy to assist in any way we can. Families come first at TCW!

Communication

We strive to make The Children's Workshop 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 as well as interactions that your child enjoyed throughout his or her day at The Children's Workshop. 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 six months except for infants and children with identified special needs, for which a progress report is prepared every three months. For school age children an annual progress report will be completed. 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.

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In addition to routinely scheduled conferences, our staff is 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. The Children's Workshop is 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.

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 share" day for home toys.

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Rest Period/Safe Sleeping Habits

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 use mats and may bring a small blanket, crib-sized sheet and small pillow from home. These items will be stored in a container that we will provide to you. If your child does not nap, we will provide quiet activities during the rest period.

Infants that are 12 months or younger will sleep in cribs. You will provide the bedding, but blankets, toys, pillows or stuffed animals are not allowed in the crib with your child. All bedding must be taken home weekly and laundered. In addition, we will ensure that your baby is always placed on his/her back for sleeping. The sleep surface will be a firm mattress in a safety-approved crib and the room temperature will cool, yet comfortable.

Lunches and Snacks

The center provides morning and afternoon snacks with an appropriate beverage. If your center also serves lunch, a menu is available for your review. If your child has food allergies or is on a special diet, arrangements for snacks and lunch can be made with the Director. If your center does not serve lunch, parents are responsible for providing a nutritious lunch for their children. When packing your child's lunch, please include a cold pack to reduce the risk of spoilage. **Please note that our centers are a nut/peanut free environment. Candy will be eliminated if sent in to school with lunch.**

Brown Bag Suggestions (as required by EEC and recommended by Massachusetts Department of Public Health)

Pasta & Sauce	Grapes	Pizza
Tuna Salad	Applesauce	Yogurt
Cheese and Crackers	Apples	Green Salad
Rice and Vegetables	Bananas	Strawberries
Chicken Fingers	Raisins	Orange Slices
Macaroni and Cheese	Melon	Carrots and Celery

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 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. Glass jars are not allowed in the classroom, so please supply jarred baby food in a plastic container with your child's name. If your child is using a sippy cup, a daily supply is needed. 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).

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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 you wish to send in a special treat for their child's classroom (i.e. birthday cake), please ask the Director in advance for the guidelines. 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 TV stations that will carry our announcements.

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 on a daily basis. In some school age programs, the Area School District will provide transportation.

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. If the center takes a field trip the children will be transported by a van or bus service.

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 by a bus and/or van service. A first aid kit and emergency contact numbers for all children will be in the vehicle. Whenever possible children with disabilities will be transported in the same vehicles used to transport the other children.

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The Children's Workshop welcomes parents as chaperones to accompany 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. The Children's Workshop has the right to decline a student's attendance to field trips for the safety of the child. Parents must be notified of this decision in advance.

Transitions

As your child grows and graduates to new classrooms, our center provides the following outline for a smooth transition. This applies to children as they become developmentally ready for the next age group. By planning transitions, we can help children adjust to new settings and approach new experiences in a positive way.

1. Parents are introduced to the new classroom and its teachers
2. A visiting plan is established, with the parent's permission, for the child to visit the new classroom
3. Current teachers share written information with the new classroom teachers on the child's developmental progress in order to ease the transition for the child.
4. The visit schedule is implemented which can range from several days to a couple of weeks, depending on the child's comfort level in the new classroom.

When your child leaves our center, to move onto public school or any other educational facility, we are happy to help implement a transition plan and will provide the same written information for you to share with the new school.

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.

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

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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.

Our teachers will provide guidance to children in a positive and consistent manner based on the understanding of the children's individual needs and the development of the child. 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.*

Children's Health Records

Prior to enrolling, we require copies of updated physicals and immunization records for your child. These records must be updated with each new immunization or annual physical.

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.

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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 child care 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 child care until they have been fever free for 24 hours without fever reducing medicine
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.

No exception will be made to administer medication without a signed authorization form and doctor's note. 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. Siblings cannot share medicines.

All medication will be administered according to physician's instructions on the medication form. If your child has a special medication such as a nebulizer, please see your Director. The Children's Workshop will not administer expired medication.

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Administration of Medication

You must fill out a Medication Consent Form for the administering of any medications. If at all possible, please see if the dosage times can be arranged during the hours when your child is not attending the Center.

All prescribed medications must be given directly to your child's teacher or a member of the center administration. Non-refrigerated meds will be stored out of the reach of children. Meds requiring refrigeration will be stored in the kitchen.

The administration of meds must be controlled and documented as follows:

The meds must be in the original pharmacy bottle---clearly labeled with the child name, physician's name and telephone number, medication name, dosage and time frame for administration.

The initial dose must be given at home in order for the parent to evaluate side effect.

The child must be on the meds for 24 hours prior to their return to the program.

Over-the-counter meds will only be administered with a written physician order. A doctor's order must be written for each individual med. The order must include specific instructions as to the dosage, schedule, method and length of time. A standing order for one year may be written. Please bring in unopened medication that has been labeled with your child's name. The expiration date should be after the timeframe for administering.

Topical, non-prescription medications may only be administered to a child with the written permission of the parent and a written order by the physician. Such permission shall be valid for no more than one year from the signature date. The Center will not administer any such medication contrary to the written directions on its original container unless directed to do so by a physician's written order. Topical medications will be stored in the classroom in an area that is inaccessible to children. Parents will be notified at the end of the day whenever topical medication is applied.

Sunscreen - Parents who want their child to wear sunscreen are asked to put on the first application before coming in each day. Teachers will reapply sunscreen once before going outdoors in the afternoon. Parents may supply their own or use the Center provided sunscreen. Permission slips must be signed by the parent. Infant parents should check with their physician.

Children with chronic health conditions will have a Health Care Plan which will describe symptoms and medical treatment that may be necessary while in care. Documentation from their physician will be necessary. Any emergency medications such as epinephrine auto injectors must be immediately available for use as needed.

All medications must be handed to the Director or designee. No medication will be accepted when left in a diaper bag, lunch box, cubbies, etc. No medication should be mixed in a child's bottle or into other food, unless specified by the physician as the proper form of administration. In that case, the medication must be mixed at the Center. The Center is not responsible for replacement of spilled

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medication or for those left beyond the expiration date. Unused, discontinued, or outdated prescription medication will be given back to the parent and documented in the child's record. When return to the parent is not possible or practical, such prescription medication must be destroyed and the destruction recorded by the Director or supervisor in accordance with the policies of the licensee and the Department of Public Health and drug control.

Parents might wish to keep extra medication permission forms handy. They are available from your child's teacher or on our website at www.childrensworkshop.com/resources and are suitable for a doctor's order to the Center.

Accidents and Emergencies

Keeping your child and all children safe is our priority. All staff are trained in first aid, and CPR for all age groups. 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 of any such occurrence.

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. If you have questions regarding the guidelines, please call 1-888-DASH2DOT or visit the website---www.nhtsa.org.

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. If you are unable or unwilling to meet your child's minimal needs, our staff is mandated by law to file a report with the Department of Children and Families.

Families' Rights

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 to 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

The Children's Workshop believes 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.

Child and Adult Care Food Program

Some locations of The Children's Workshop are members of the Child and Adult Care Food Program (CACFP). In those centers, 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.

In accordance with Federal law and the U.S. Department of Agriculture policy, The Children's Workshop is prohibited from discriminating on the basis of race, color, national origin, sex, age or disability. If you feel that you have been treated unfairly you can file a complaint by writing to: USDA, Director, Office of Adjudication, 1400 Independence Avenue, SW, Washington, D.C. 20250-9410 or call toll free (866) 632-9992 (Voice). Individuals who are hearing impaired or have speech disabilities may contact USDA through the Federal Relay Service at (800) 877-8339; or (800) 845-6136 (Spanish). USDA is an equal opportunity provider and employer.

Community Agency Involvement

The Children's Workshop 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 which are unrelated to the direct care of children.

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Conflict Resolution

The Children's Workshop hopes that all questions with regards to child care 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 the center's Regional Director of Operations. (Your center Director 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 the Department for Early Education and Care.

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 and the contact person 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.
8. With the parent's written consent, a liaison (usually the Director) will be designated to insure proper implementation of the plan. A written notice of the plan will be sent to the school department or early intervention program. The liaison will also act as the center's primary contact between all participating parties.

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9. A written notice will be sent to the appropriate administrators of special education that the Center is serving a child with a disability, if the child is 2.9 years old or older. A written notice will be sent to the Early Intervention program if the Center is serving a child with a disability who is younger than 2.9 years of age.
10. 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.
11. 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

Prior to discussing suspension and/or termination with a family, TCW will utilize the referral procedure as outlined above. Every effort will be made to avoid this step, but in rare situations, the following procedures may need to be followed:

If after the referral procedures are ineffective, TCW may suspend or terminate based on the following actions:

- 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

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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. The Director will pursue options for supportive services to the program including consultations and educator trainings.
3. 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.
4. Under no circumstance will the child be treated differently from any other child within the program.
5. 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, a meeting will be scheduled by the Director. 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. In this event, the family will be given 5-10 business days to make new child care arrangements. If there is another incident during the grace period immediate termination will occur.
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. If the problem reoccurs after this time period, the process must start again.
6. 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.

Child Abuse and Neglect

Anyone may report concerns of Child Abuse and Neglect to the appropriate state agency as a non-mandated reporter. However, The Children's Workshop and its teachers, fall into the following category, as a mandated reporter and we must file a report when if we believe a child is being abused or neglected.

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Mandated Reporter

Any Physician, medical intern, or hospital personnel engaged in the examination, care or treatment of persons; medical examiner, psychologist; emergency medical technician; dentist, nurse; chiropractor; podiatrist; osteopath; public or private school teacher; educational administrator; guidance or family counselor; day care worker or any person paid to care for or work with a child in any public or private facility, or home or program licensed by the state. This includes programs that provide day care or residential services to children or which provide the services of child care systems and child care food programs; probation officer; clerk/magistrate of the district courts; social worker; foster parent; firefighter; or police officer.

Parent Information (provided by the MA Department of Early Education & Care)

The General Laws of the Commonwealth of Massachusetts mandates to the Department of Early Education and Care the legal responsibility of promulgating and enforcing rules and regulations governing the operation of child care centers (including nursery schools), and school age child care programs.

These regulations, 102 CMR 7.00, establish minimum standards for operation of group child care and school age child care programs in the Commonwealth. The regulations require certain things of licensees (child care program owner) in regard to their work with parents. A summary of the required parent information, rights, and responsibilities follows.

Parental Input. The licensee must appropriately involve parents of children in care in visiting the program, meeting with the staff and receiving reports of their children's progress. The program must have a procedure for allowing you to give input and make suggestions, but it is up to the program to decide whether or not they will be implemented.

Meeting with parents. In group child care programs, the licensee shall assure that the administrator or his designee meets with the parent(s) prior to admitting a child to the program. The parents shall have an opportunity to visit the program's classrooms at the time of the meeting or prior to the enrollment of the child. In school age programs, the licensee shall provide an opportunity for the parent(s) and child to visit the program and meet the staff before the child's enrollment.

Parent Information. The licensee must provide to the parents upon admission of their child the program's written statement of purpose, including the program philosophy, goals and objectives, and the characteristics of children served; information on the administrative organization of the program, including lines of authority and supervision; the program's behavior management policy; the program's plan for referring parents to appropriate social, mental health, education and medical services for children; the termination and suspension policy; a list of nutritious foods to be sent for snacks or meals; the program's policy and procedures for identifying and reporting suspected child abuse or neglect; the procedures for emergency health care and the illness exclusion policy; the program's transportation plan; the procedure for administration of medication, and, upon request, a copy of the complete health care

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policy; a copy of the fee schedule, and in school age child care, the procedures for on-going parent communication. All of this information may be contained in a "Parent Handbook".

Parent Conferences. The licensee must make staff available for individual conferences with parents at your request.

Progress Reports. At least every six (6) months the licensee should meet with you to discuss your child's activities and participation in the program. The licensee will prepare a written progress report for your child, will provide a copy to you, and will maintain a copy of the report in your child's file. If your child is an infant or a child with disabilities, you should receive a written progress report at least every three (3) months. Program staff must bring special problems or significant developments, particularly if they regard infants, to your attention as soon as they arise.

Parent Visits. You have the right to visit the center and your child's room at any time while your child is present.

Children's Records. Information contained in a child's record is privileged and confidential. Program staff may not distribute or release information in a child's record to anyone not directly related to implementing the program plan for the child without your written consent. You must be notified if your child's record is subpoenaed.

Access to your child's record. You are entitled to have access to your child's record at reasonable times on request. You must have access to the record within two (2) business days of your request unless you consent to a longer time period. You must be allowed to view your child's entire record, even if it is maintained in more than one location. The center must have procedures governing access to, duplication of, and dissemination of children's record, and must maintain a permanent, written log in each child's record which identifies anyone who has had access to the record or who has received any information from the record. This log is available only to you and the people responsible for maintaining the center's records.

Amending your child's record. You have the right to add information, comments, data, or any other relevant materials to the child's record. You also have the right request deletion or amendment of any information contained in your child's record. If you believe that adding information is not sufficient to explain, clarify or correct objectionable material in your child's record, you have the right to a conference with the licensee to make your objections known. If you have a conference with the licensee, the licensee must inform you in writing within one week of his decision regarding your objections. If the licensee decides in your favor, he must immediately take the steps necessary to put the decision into effect.

Transfer of Records. When your child is no longer in care, the licensee can give your child's record to you, or any other person you identify, upon your written request.

Charge for Copies. The licensee shall not charge an unreasonable fee for copies of any information contained in your child's record.

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Program Responsibilities (provided by the MA Department of Early Education & Care)

Providing Information to the Department The program must make available any information requested by the Department to determine compliance with any Department regulations governing the program, by providing access to its facilities, records, staff and references.

Reporting abuse or neglect. All center staff are mandated reporters. They are required by law to report suspected abuse and neglect to either the Department of Children & Families or to the licensee's program administrator. The licensee must have written policies and procedures for reporting and must provide the written policy to you upon enrollment.

Notification of injury The licensee must notify you immediately of any injury which requires emergency care. The licensee must also notify you, in writing, within 24 hours, if any first aid is administered to your child.

Availability of EEC Regulations The program must maintain a copy of the regulations, *102 CMR 7.00: Standards for the Licensure or Approval of Group Day Care and School Age Child Care Programs*, on the premises of the center and must make them available to any person upon request. If you have a question about any of the regulations, ask the center to show them to you.

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 with The Children's Workshop.

Late Pick-Up Penalty

If a child is left at The Children's Workshop 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.

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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

If your center has a policy that allows a vacation or a leave of absence from the center, free of tuition obligation, it is specified on the Policy and Tuition sheet for the center. If not, 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.

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 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!

Welcome to The Children's Workshop!

