

PHILOSOPHY

The Next Step Learning Center, Inc is dedicated to providing the foundation to encourage each child's lifelong love of learning in a safe and nurturing environment by:

- focusing on building each child's emotional, social, cognitive, and physical skills
- offering a wide range of enriching activities to meet the needs of each child
- offering multi-cultural and developmentally appropriate materials and equipment
- supporting the professional development of each teacher and staff member
- offering open communication with families in an atmosphere of mutual trust and respect

VISION

To develop innovative solutions which enable us to grow the number of children and families served and to be recognized as the premier child and family educational facility in our area.

Through our leadership and passion we will:

- Provide a secure, caring and enriched environment that promotes learning and the development of the whole child.
- Develop lifelong relationships, create family solutions, and enhance the quality of life for our families.
- Provide a fun, challenging work environment that fosters teamwork, inspires professional excellence, and encourages contribution by all team members.
- Leverage technology to develop innovative learning products and solutions.
- Provide superior levels of support and service to our schools.
- Achieve the best financial performance in the industry, allowing us to fulfill our mission.

PROGRAMS

BEAUTIFUL BEGINNINGS (6 weeks - 12 months)

LITTLE CRUISERS (Crawling-12 months)

FIRST STEPS (12 - 24 months)

LITTLE EXPLORERS (18- 36 months)

DISCOVERY PRESCHOOL (24 – 48 months)

PRESCHOOL (3-5 years)

PRE-K (4-5 years)

BEFORE & AFTER CARE PROGRAM (K – 5th Grade)

FULL DAY PRIVATE KINDERGARTEN (School Year Only)

KINDERGARTEN ENRICHMENT PROGRAM (School Year Only)

AFTER SCHOOL PROGRAM (K – 5TH Grade)

DISCOVERY CLUB SUMMER PROGRAM (5-11 years)

HOURS OF OPERATIONS

The Center is open from 6:30am to 6:00pm, Monday through Friday of each week, except for specified holidays.

CENTER CONTACT INFORMATION

The telephone number is **(302) 436-3633**. The second line and fax number is (302) 436-2520. You may also contact the Center through email, thenextstepde@yahoo.com

ACCESS TO CENTER

Every employee and parent/guardian has been given a pin number to enter the building during operating hours. For the safety of the staff and children, please do not hold the door for anyone. They will need to use their code or be buzzed in by the receptionist or the Director.

RELEASE OF CHILDREN

Children will never be released to someone not on the emergency card. If someone on the emergency card has not been photographed on our computer, they will need to show identification and be photographed for future reference.

If you would like someone not listed on the emergency card to pick up your child, you will need to fill out a temporary release form. That person will also have to show identification, before we release the child. If the form has not been filled out, the child will not be released to that person!

In the event of an emergency and a last minute arrangement must be made for picking up your child. You must give the code word, selected at time of admissions, to an approved staff member at the Center. All pertinent information must be given on the person who will be picking up your child and they must give the code word and show identification before your child will be released. The staff member will also make a confirmation call to you to confirm that you actually called the Center.

In the case of any type of custodial conflict, children will be released to both parents and anyone listed on the emergency card, until a copy of the court order has been given to the Center. Once a court order is received, your child will not be released to the non-custodial parent or family members named in that order, unless preventing this puts other children in danger. In which case, the police will be called immediately and all pertinent information will be given to them directly.

ADMISSIONS

Admission to The Center is an ongoing process and we accept applications year round. Acceptance into our program is only limited by space availability and completion of all necessary paperwork. Care is provided on a priority basis to meet full time childcare needs. Part-time care may be available for no less than 2 days per week. Waiting lists are routinely updated, checked, and revised to assist parents in placement of their child/children.

Admission is complete with the following steps being taken:

1. Interview and Tour with the Director.
2. Completed Application Packet
3. Completed and current Medical/Immunization Forms from the child's doctor
4. Parent Contract signed and returned
5. Registration Fee of \$30.00 is received
6. Two week's tuition payment is received; one is applied to last week of care

REGISTRATION FEE

A \$30.00 registration fee will apply only upon admission to the Center.

SUPPLY FEE

A \$40.00 per child or a \$60.00 per family supply fee is charged every year in September.

DEPOSIT

One week's tuition is required before the first day of care. This deposit will be applied to the last week of care at the Center.

PAYMENTS

Tuition fees are paid every Friday for the following week. On Thursday, your account will be billed for the upcoming week.

A tuition box is located in the reception area for you to drop your payments into. Please make payments payable to: **The Next Step**. If you are paying by cash, please be sure to give it directly to the receptionist or the Director and do not leave until you have received a printed receipt.

POC PLUS SUBSIDIES

The Center accepts, POC Plus, subsidized child care. The Department of Health and Social Services will determine your qualifying amount. The Center then takes that POC amount and subtracts it from our weekly charge to determine your weekly fee (co-pay), paid directly to the Center. POC Plus families are responsible for paying their childcare fees in a timely manner, as per our contract.

LATE PAYMENT FEE

A \$15.00 late payment fee will be added to your statement, for everyday your payment is not received starting the open of business on Monday.

NON-SUFFICIENT FUNDS FEE

There will be a \$25.00 fee for any returned checks for non-sufficient funds.

LATE PICK-UP FEE

A \$15.00 late fee will be charged for any child picked up after 6:00 pm. A \$10.00 fee will be charged for every five minutes after 6:15 pm. If you anticipate that you may be late picking up your child please call the Center. **Calling does not relieve you from the late fee.**

DELINQUENT ACCOUNTS

If your account is more than a week delinquent, you will need to make a payment immediately. After two weeks of delinquency, unless other arrangements have been made with the Director, your child's spot will be relinquished.

VACATION AND SICK DAYS

You will still be responsible for payment on days your child is not in attendance due to vacation or illness.

INCLEMENT WINTER WEATHER

The Center will be open regardless of public school closings or delays. In the event that the Center has to be closed, it will be announced on WBOC, our website, our Facebook page, and our voicemail. Feel free to call the Center to ensure that we are open. There will not be any tuition reductions for winter delays or closings.

SIBLING DISCOUNTS

There is a 10% reduction in tuition on the lower paying childcare fee for full time families who have more than one child enrolled at the Center. The discount is taken off the oldest child's tuition rate.

CONTRACT PERIOD

Each contract period is from the end of August for a year. The contracts are reviewed every spring and parents will be informed immediately of any changes.

WITHDRAWAL POLICY

A two-week written notice is required to withdraw your child. You are responsible for payment of services for the first week of your notice. The deposit, made at the time of admissions, will be used for the last week with the exception of remaining balances or fees. Any remaining balances or fees will be required the Friday before the last week.

CONSENTS

I grant permission for my child to be taken off premises for walking field trips, including visits to the Selbyville Library. I will not hold The Next Step Learning Center, Inc. responsible or liable for any injury which may occur.

I consent to emergency medical treatment being given to my child if needed. The Next Step Learning Center, Inc. will make every attempt to contact me as soon as possible.

HOLIDAYS

The Center will provide services from 6:30 am to 6:00 pm, Monday through Friday.

The Center will be closed on New Years Day, Good Friday, Easter Monday, Memorial Day, Independence Day, the last Friday in August, Labor Day, Thanksgiving, the Friday after Thanksgiving, Christmas Eve, Christmas Day, and the day after Christmas.

There will also be 2 additional days for staff development and cleaning that the Center will be closed. One will be in the Spring and one in the Fall, they will be listed on the calendar and/or you will be notified at least 1 month in advance.

You will still be responsible for payment on all holidays and staff development days.

MEDICAL FORMS

Delaware State requires that all children entering childcare must have an age appropriate health appraisal within the last twelve months. The health appraisal shall include:

- A health history
- A physical exam
- Growth and development
- Recommendations regarding required medication, restrictions, or modifications of your child's activities, diet, or care
- Medical information pertinent to treatment in case of emergency
- Documentation of any recommended or required screenings, such as blood-lead or tuberculosis
- Documentation of the immunization status, with a listing of day, month, year of administration for each immunization required by the Division of Public Health.

Prior to admission to the Center, all medical forms must be completed and signed by your child's physician. All immunizations are to be current, unless a written plan has been established allowing admittance without immunizations. All immunizations must be kept up to date while in the care of the Center. The Director will notify you if you are behind on any immunizations, you will then have a pre-determined amount of time to get the updated immunizations or your child will be excluded from the Center until the immunizations have been obtained.

SICK CHILD POLICY

Control of communicable illness among the children is a prime concern. Policies and guidelines related to outbreaks of communicable illness in the Center have been developed with the help of the health department and local pediatricians. In order to protect the entire group of children, as well as your own child, we ask that you keep sick children at home if they have experienced any of the following symptoms within the past 24 hours:

- * A contagious or communicable disease
- * A temperature of over 100 degrees or higher
- * Heavy nasal discharge; yellow or greenish in color
- * Signs of a newly developing cold or uncontrollable cough
- * Any discharge or drainage from eyes, ears, nose, or any open sore
- * Diarrhea, vomiting, or an upset stomach
- * Lack of proper immunizations
- * Unknown questionable rashes and impetigo, measles, chicken pox, etc.
- * Strep throat- child must be out of daycare for a minimum of 48 hours
- * **Cannot participate in play both indoors and outdoors**

Highly infectious conditions will require a physician's written approval before returning to the center.

Children who become ill with any of these symptoms will be returned home and will not be allowed to return for at least 24 hours. **You child needs to be symptom free, without medication, for at least 24 hours before returning to the Center.** We appreciate your cooperation with this policy. If you have any questions about whether or not your child is well enough to attend school or group care that day, please call the center before bringing your child.

ILL CHILDREN AT THE CENTER

If your child becomes ill at the Center, we will call for you or a designated adult on your Emergency Card to pick up your child as soon as possible.

MEDICATIONS

The Center would prefer not to give any medication to the children in our care. In the event that scheduling does not allow all doses to be given at home, you must provide written permission and fill out a form with information for each medication to be given. Only staff members trained in Administration of Medication can administer medications in accordance with Delaware State Law. All medication must be in its original container, properly labeled, has not expired, and is authorized by the child's health care provider. Upon completion of a prescription drug, the remaining medication will be turned over to you.

The Center shall keep a record of the administration of medication to your child including medication dosage, time administered, by whom administered, and any adverse effects observed. **The Next Step Learning Center, Inc. will not administer the first dosage of any medication!!**

SHOELESS ENVIROMENT

As children are developing the skills to walk they will spend quite a bit of time on the floor. To ensure their health and safety the Center asks that all parents/guardians, visitors, staff, and children remove their shoes before entering the Infant Rooms. The Center understands that playtime on the floors is a core part of each child's discovery experience. Shoes track dirt, germs and oils onto the floors, and can create loud, intimidating noises. By asking everyone to remove their shoes, we can keep the floors clean and safe for children to crawl and play.

ACCIDENTS/INCIDENTS

Children sometimes receive bumps and bruises as part of their daily routine. There will be an accident/injury report including your child's name, date, description of the injury, how it occurred, and any first aid or medical care required. Whenever an injury report needs to be made, you will be notified and your signature will be required on the injury report at time of pick up. An injury report for each incident shall be maintained your child's file, along with a record of notification or attempts to notify you.

SAFETY

At the Center, your child's safety is our primary concern. Our Childcare Manager proprietary technology allows our staff instant access to your child's medical information, arrival and departure times, and the names and photos of people authorized for drop off and pick up. Children learn better when they feel they are in a secure environment. That's why we provide this additional security, combined with a comfortable, homelike atmosphere.

EMERGENCY PROCEDURES

Emergency Information Updates: Emergency Card must be kept updated with current phone numbers, addresses, emergency numbers and other pertinent information in case an emergency situation occurs. You must promptly notify the Center of any changes in contact information.

First Aid: A completely stocked first aid kit is located in the Center at all times. If the children leave the Center for a field trip, the teachers are required to carry copies of each child's Emergency Card and a first aid kit. Staff members are required to be certified in First Aid and CPR for Infants, Children, & Adults.

Notification of Parents/Guardians: In an emergency situation, once the children and staff's safety is secured, all attempts will be made to promptly notify you by phone, according to the information provided on each child's Emergency Card.

Fire Drills: Fire drills, both announced and unannounced, are conducted a minimum of once a month.

Emergency Situations that require Immediate Pick up: You will be notified to pick up your child immediately when an emergency situation arises such as a natural disaster, loss of utilities, etc. This would be implemented when a hazardous condition or situation presents itself and hampers the welfare of the children and staff and/or hampers the implementation of proper health and safety regulations necessary for the correct care of children. All closings are at the discretion of the Director.

Emergency Situations that require Extended Care: In the event of an emergency that would require extended care, you would be notified of the emergency as soon as the children and staff are safe. The location (the Center, our Clubhouse, or Selbyville Library) of pick up and any other pertinent information would be released at that time. The standard release of children policy would still be in effect.

Parent/Guardian Emergency Notification: If your child's injury or symptoms of illness require professional attention, we will notify you immediately. Your child will be transported to Peninsula Regional Medical Hospital. You are expected to go to the hospital to receive your child. The emergency card and parent agreement give us permission to seek the necessary treatment to insure your child's safety until you or your physician arrives.

Classroom Management

The staff facilitates a warm, nurturing environment for each child enrolled in The Next Step Learning Center, Inc. All members of the staff receive in-service training to ensure the best possible care and sensitivity to each child's needs. With our philosophy of promoting and building positive self-esteem, our childcare programs create and encourage children to feel good about themselves.

Discipline Policy

Discipline means to guide or to teach. There can be no freedom without discipline- children need limits. Guidance at The Next Step Learning Center, Inc. is love-oriented, not power-oriented. Discipline helps the child develop the internal controls to behave appropriately. Therefore, the staff uses positive behavior management techniques to help children understand expectations for behavior. They anticipate possible conflict situations and, when necessary, intervene in a timely manner to prevent problems from occurring or escalating. The staff creates an environment that encourages positive behavior by:

- Defining the classroom areas
- Planning a safe, comfortable and developmentally appropriate program
- Establishing clear rules and reasonable limits that protect each child's safety
- Using positive language to explain desired behavior
- Speaking in soft conversational voices
- Bending down to the child's eye level when speaking
- Avoiding calling across the room
- Providing clear and positive suggestions, alternate choices, or redirection when necessary
- Helping children anticipate transition to the next routine
- Encouraging verbalization, problem-solving, self-help skills, and independence
- Acknowledging each child's emotions and feelings.
- * Setting an appropriate example with our own behavior

Teachers circulate throughout the classroom and outdoor play areas, placing themselves in locations to see the entire area at a glance. They use humor, imagination, redirection and consistency to assist the children in developing self-control. The staff never uses corporal punishment; control; isolate; humiliate; or withhold food or sleep as a punishment. Emphasis is placed on teaching alternative behaviors and giving each child situations to practice positive behaviors in order to establish new, acceptable habits. Staff may utilize a "cooling off" time-out when a child is in danger of hurting him/herself or others. This brief period is intended as a time for the child to regain self-control in order to better communicate and listen to the needs of all involved. The "cooling off" time out is to be no longer than one minute per year of age, unless a longer time is absolutely necessary for everyone's safety.

AGGRESSIVE BEHAVIOR

All children need to be able to participate in planned activities and be able to follow simple directions. As with all aggressive behaviors parents are notified with each incident. Aggressive and hurtful behavior includes, but is not limited to: biting, hitting, kicking, pushing, and pinching. Such behavior is not appropriate. We will use every appropriate method to help children control their frustrations and anger. However, if your child can not gain self control and is not responding to our discipline techniques, we may call you to pick up your child for the remainder of that day.

If their behavior becomes an on-going issue and does not change, a conference between you, the teachers, the Director will be held. A behavioral contract will be developed and a follow up conference will be scheduled for the following month. At the follow up conference it will be determined as to whether the child no longer needs the contract, the contract still needs to be followed, a new contract needs to be devised, or alternative childcare needs to be found. In the event of an extreme case, your child could be immediately removed.

NAP/REST TIME

There is to be at least one adult in every classroom during nap time. Children are to be checked regularly, at least every 15 minutes if under 1 year of age.

Infant Rooms

The rest time in the Infant Rooms is sporadic. Most newborns in the infant room will sleep for much of the day. As they grow and develop they will begin to sleep less and less. The staff will work with the parents/guardians to devise a sleep schedule that is similar to home. When the infants are moved to the older Infant Room they will have two naps a day, one in the morning and one shortly after lunch.

All children under the age of one are to sleep on their backs and in their own crib, unless other needs have been documented and discussed with the parents/guardians and the Director. Cribs are to be checked regularly for safety and security.

The Center will provide the bedding which is to be cleaned at least once a week or as needed (after each day if children are part time). The mattress is also to be cleaned and sanitized at least once a week.

No pillows, bumpers pads, blankets, soft toys, or stuffed animals shall be in the crib while the child is sleeping. During the colder months, children may sleep in a sleep suit if provided by the parents. These are to be sent home at least once a week to be cleaned.

Toddler/Preschool Rooms

The toddler and preschool children have a rest time (approximately an hour and a half) after lunch. Children must rest quietly on their cots for 30 minutes, after which time, they are to be offered quiet activities until the remaining children get up from nap.

A cot for each child, with their name on it, is to be provided and is to be cleaned at least once a week. The Center also provides the sheets that go on the cots, to be cleaned at least once a week. The parents are to provide a blanket and a pillow for each child, if they would like them to have them. These will be sent home every Friday for cleaning and returned on Monday!

DIAPERING

Every child wearing a diaper is to be visually checked and/ or changed a minimum of every two hours. Children are to be changed immediately, when it is clear that they have soiled their diaper. Diaper changing procedures are mounted in front of each changing area. Every employee is expected to follow these procedures when changing a child.

The Center does not rinse or clean soiled clothes (or non-disposable diapers), they are to be put in a plastic bag and given to you at pick up.

You are to provide the Center with diapers, diaper ointment, and a bulk size box of wipes. The classroom teachers will inform you in advance when your child is in need of more diapering supplies.

TOILET TRAINING

Toilet Training is a very important stage in a child's development. Together with you, the teachers at the Center will work on the skills to become self-sufficient in the bathroom.

The bathroom is always open to the children. Special attention is given to toileting during transition times such as: going outside, before and after meals, before rest time, etc.

Children learn to respect each other's privacy and help model for others who may be learning to use the toilet. Self help skills and proper hygiene are emphasized. Children are never made to feel "bad" about accidents. Together with the teacher's assistance the child will develop future strategies to avoid having accidents (i.e. mastering their toilet skills).

During the process of toilet training, you need to be sure there is always at least 2 sets of clothes available and a pair of shoes. Again, the Center does not rinse or clean soiled clothes. They will be put in a bag and given to you at pick up time.

MEALS

The Center provides children with a nutritious am and pm snack. A healthy and nutritious lunch is available for an additional \$3.50 a day.

All meals and snacks are plated and served in an environment designed for a relaxed social experience. The classroom teachers are expected to sit and eat with the children at snack and lunch times. The staff encourages children to utilize self-help skills to gain independence, while they sit and eat with the children to model appropriate mealtime manners and habits.

The children are served a small portion of all the foods being offered and are encouraged to try a “no thank you bite” of all foods. If children want more they are given more (or serve themselves more-if age appropriate), once they have asked with their polite words. Children are never required to eat foods that they are not comfortable eating, and food is never used as a reward or punishment.

If you are sending lunch from home, teachers will not open cans, cook, or in any way prepare food. Food should be cut into bite size pieces for your child's needs. Food containers and lunch boxes must be labeled with your child's name on each part. Do not send glass.

Food may not be left at the center. Food not taken home at the end of each day will be discarded. Lunch boxes and dishes will not be washed or sanitized at the Center.

Children's lunches brought from home **must meet the nutritional standards, 1 item from the milk, protein, and grain food groups and 2 items from the fruit and vegetable food group. All fruit juice must be 100% Juice or it will not be served!** If your child's lunch is not up to these standards, their lunch will be packed up and they will be given the nutritional lunch provided by the Center. An additional charge of \$3.50 will be added to your bill.

Infant Rooms

Infant Rooms will be on a feeding schedule that is specific to each child. Infants shall be held during bottle feeding (no more than one at a time) and no child is to be placed in their crib with a bottle. Bottles are discouraged by the time an infant turns 1 year of age. Children are encouraged to drink from a cup as soon as the infant is developmentally able to hold a cup. Juices shall not be offered to infants until they can drink from a cup and then no more than 4 ounces of 100% juice a day.

You are to provide the Center with enough prepared bottles for everyday your child is in care. All bottles are to be labeled with your child's name. Finished bottles will be rinsed (not cleaned) and placed back in the child's cubby or bag. All unused bottles will be sent home at the end of the day. Parents also need to supply the Center with an unopened can of formula or packets and 1 empty bottle to be left at the Center, in case daily bottles are forgotten or not enough is supplied. If the child is breastfed, please leave at least one freezer bag for emergencies.

Semi solid foods may be introduced to infants 4 to 7 months old, if requested by you and **shall be required** once an infant is 8 months (unless specified in writing by the child's physician). The Center will not serve a new food to any child. Please do not send any food, until your child has eaten it for a minimum of 3 days at home.

You are to provide the Center with all food during the transition from bottle feeding only to "regular" snacks and lunches provided by the Center. Label all food and containers with your child's name. If the food needs to be warmed make sure the container is microwave safe. The teachers will not prepare any food, so make sure it is ready to be eaten.

A daily written record of each child's nutritional intake shall be maintained at the Center, you may receive a copy upon request. Any feeding problems experienced will be discussed before the infant is released for the day.

PARENT-STAFF COMMUNICATION

Parent-Staff communication can take place at arrival & departure, through e-mail, phone calls, handouts in your child's cubby, etc. Near the entrance is our parent communication area where you'll find:

- Sign In/Out Computer
- Monthly lunch & snack menus
- Notices of upcoming events
- Payment drop box
- Parent Library

You are welcome to visit the center at any time. If you want to see how your child is doing please try to call during nap-time (1-3 pm) when the teachers are available to speak to you.

You are encouraged to become involved in your child's program and to actively participate in activities and functions at the Center. Sharing your talents with the children can be a great way to become more involved with your child and his/her friends. Field trip volunteers are always welcome. If you are interested please inform a staff member.

The best communication is the quick chat at arrival and departure time. This is an easy way for you to stay abreast of your child on a daily basis. Most formal communications are through notes or emails. We also have a website (www.thenextstepde.com) and a Facebook page, where you can find general information and ongoing communication.

In the Infant and Toddler Rooms, teachers fill out a daily report form that states how much your child ate, how long your child slept, activities of the day, and details of diapering or toileting trips.

The bulletin boards for each classroom, as well as the general one in the entry area, are also important places to find communications and/or information from the Center.

Each classroom, as well as the Director, will be responsible for an addition to the monthly newsletter. This will keep you up to date on what the children will be studying, up coming events, and any other exciting news from the Center. The newsletter also includes any upcoming deadlines, useful child development and parenting information, and ideas for fun activities to do with children at home.

Parent-teacher conferences will be scheduled at least once a year to report your child's progress in a vast variety of areas. A written copy of the conference report will be given to you and one will be kept in your child's file. In addition to the scheduled conference, special conferences can also be arranged at any time during the year upon parent or staff request.

The Center has books, articles, videos and other materials available to you on child growth, development, discipline, and educational activities to enjoy at home with your child. There are also many children's books to help them understand and cope with special circumstances, such as death, divorce, or fears. You may check any of these books out through the Director. If any materials are lost or damaged you will be responsible for replacing them or paying the monetary value to the Center for replacement.

Throughout the year, the Center will offer special interest and parenting classes. You are encouraged to attend these informational sessions. Talking with other parents and professionals about child development, child rearing issues (bed times, morning routines, etc), and educational issues can be very informative and helpful. Childcare is available and free for all enrolled children when you attend these sessions. Meeting dates and times will be posted on the information board.

Once a year, you will have the opportunity to provide the Center and staff with feedback on program features and operations. However, you are encouraged to share compliments, concerns or suggestions at any time.

PARENT BEHAVIOR AT THE CENTER

The Center is committed to creating a safe, nurturing and caring environment. We speak with all children respectfully, and never use any form of belittling, corporal punishment, or improper language. We believe, because you have chosen the Center, you are also committed to these same principles of childcare. We ask that you follow our philosophy when at our Center.

TELEPHONE USE

The use of cellular phones is prohibited in the Center. As a special time to bond with your child and communicate with the classroom teachers, you are asked to end all cell phone calls (and texts) before entering the building.

ALL telephones at The Next Step Learning Center are for business use. If you need to talk to a classroom teacher or want to know how your child is doing, please feel free to call the Center. The classroom teachers will return your call at their earliest convenience.

Employees are not to be using their cell phones on the premises, this includes text messaging. If you see an employee using their cell phone, please inform the Director immediately.

SMOKING / ALCOHOL / DRUGS

Smoking, alcohol, and drugs of any kind (except for valid prescription medication) are **absolutely prohibited** on or near the Center. The manufacture, distribution, dispensing, possession, sale, purchase or use of a controlled substance (cigarettes, alcohol, or any type of drug) on Center property is prohibited and is grounds for immediate termination of the parent contract.

No child will be released to a parent/guardian or emergency contact if they appear to be under the influence of drugs or alcohol. Another adult on the emergency card will be called to pick up the child. If it results in a child being picked up late, late fees will apply

CHILD ABUSE AND MALTREATMENT

The Center is committed to a safe, nurturing environment for children to grow and learn in a positive manner. If you feel your child's needs are not being met, bring your concerns to the Director.

Should we recognize any signs of child abuse or neglect coming into our Center, the State of Delaware mandates our staff to file a report. If the report is taken, the Department of Child and Family Services will step in with a review and assist the family.

DIVORCE/SEPERATION

The Center wants to serve all our families in the best possible way, especially during difficult transitions. If shared custody agreements are in place, we would appreciate a written notice of your family's plan to make arrivals and departures for your child an easy event. Unless we have a legal document, the Center can not presume one parent has more or less rights than another.

STAFF BABYSITTING ENROLLED CHILDREN

The Center would prefer that staff not babysit for any enrolled children. Center staff is not allowed to solicit baby-sitting jobs and the Center does not circulate a list of employee's names and phone numbers.

In the event that a staff member decides to provide in-home child care, your child may not be currently enrolled in that staff member's classroom. Real or perceived favoritism can become a problem along with concerns about professional confidentiality. Young children also find it hard to understand and relate to the differing roles of baby-sitter and teacher. It is hard for them to "share" the special person who comes to their home to play and entertain.

ARRIVAL

To help achieve the goal of allowing your child to become independent, emotionally healthy, and well adjusted, we recommend the following practices for children two years of age and older:

- Whenever possible, children should be walked in, not carried.
- Present your child to the teacher on arrival. The greeting between teacher and child is invaluable.
- Infant and Toddler Rooms, please fill out the top portion of the Daily Report
- Goodbyes at the Center should be part of a normal, everyday routine. Separation should be sweet and brief, with a quick reassurance about the planned pick-up.

Please take time to verbally communicate any pertinent information about the child's well being to the teachers.

If your child will not be attending on a scheduled day, please call the Center by 10:00 AM.

In order to keep classroom disruptions to a minimum, we require all children to arrive at specified times.

Kindergarten, Pre-K and Preschool must arrive before 9 am

Discovery Preschool must arrive before 9:30 am

All other classes must arrive before 10 am

DAILY DEPARTURE

When picking up your child be sure the staff is aware he or she is leaving, sign out for the day, review their Daily Information Sheet, check his/her cubby (artwork, dirty clothes, handouts, etc.).

Once you and your child are ready, you must monitor and help reinforce our policy that children stay with an adult at all times. Children must never run out of the Center unaccompanied by an adult. Cars are constantly arriving and departing and we do not want your child to be at risk of a serious accident. Please guide children safely to your vehicle.

SIBLINGS AND OLDER CHILDREN

Siblings and older children are prohibited from entering the Infant Rooms. This policy has been put in place to keep our young children as safe and healthy as possible. If you have more than one child in our care, please drop off the older child first and pick the older child up last, so there will not be the temptation to want to enter the Infant and Toddler Rooms.

MOVING TO THE NEXT ROOM

Children move to the next room based on development, not age. Children are typically moved in January, June, or the end of August. Changes will be discussed in advance with the parents/guardians. Before any child is moved we will consider all the classrooms and children involved. Once a child is scheduled to move to a new room, they will spend a few hours a day in the new room the week prior to their move.

APPROPRIATE DRESS

We believe that children learn best when actively engaged in play. This play can get messy. Children need to be dressed appropriately for all activities during the day. Occasionally, clothing can become stained; so send children in clothes they do not need to be concerned about getting dirty.

Please make sure your child has the appropriate outdoor clothing for the changing seasons. Children must wear shoes that are practical, as well as comfortable. **Open toed shoes, such as sandals and flip flops are prohibited.**

TOYS FROM HOME

The Center has an abundance of materials for children to use each day. Unless specifically requested by your child's teacher, we ask you to leave all toys at home. Conflicts over toys from home do not contribute to the peaceful atmosphere we try to create. The Center will not be held responsible for damaged or lost toys. **We do not allow toy guns, knives or other weapons in the Center.**

CLEANING

All classrooms will be cleaned daily or more often if needed. Diapering surfaces, toys that have been mouthed, bibs, and any area for eating/ food preparation will be disinfected after each use.

There is also weekly toy and fixture cleaning schedule for each classroom. This insures that every toy is cleaned at least once a week. The Infant and Toddler rooms will have a minimum of twice a week for cleaning. This is detailed cleaning and soaking process for every toy, book, fixture, etc.

Cleaning will be done immediately in any classroom where a serious illness or communicable disease has occurred. This includes every toy and fixture.

TELEVISION AND COMPUTER USE

The Center discourages the use of television and computer use. Many families and Centers use the television as a form of babysitting. The Center not only has more faith in our program, but also does not want to contribute to the growing epidemic of childhood obesity.

Children under the age of 2 are prohibited from watching television, movies, etc. or using computers in anyway, per Delcare Rule #383 or #384.

FIELD TRIPS

The Center requires that all children have signed parental permission for any trips off the premises. The general permission form that each parent signs at admissions gives the Center permission to take children on walking field trips. Children are not allowed to go on any field trips until this general permission form is signed and returned.

Field trips that require transportation will require a separate parental permission form for each trip. If a parent has not signed for a separate trip, the child will be placed into another classroom with space available or a teacher will stay in the room if enough children are not attending the trip.

An emergency card for every child attending, an attendance sheet, a cellular phone, and a fully stocked first aid kit must be brought on all field trips. There must also be adequate supervision before any class leaves for a field trip or the trip must be rescheduled.

No child under the age of two will be taken on any field trip!

ALTERNATE CARE PLANS

For times when your child may not be able to attend the Center due to illness or closings, make plans for alternate child care with family members, neighbors or other parents in advance for these unexpected situations. You also need to have arrangements for times when you may be held up and unable to pick up your child before the Center closes.

BIRTHDAYS AND SPECIAL OCCASIONS

We encourage you to give your child the gift of yourself! If that is not an option, sharing a special treat with all the children in their program on their special day is encouraged. Please let your child's teacher know of your plans in advance as some food and party restrictions may apply.

PARKING

There are 3 temporary parking spots in front of the main entrance. These are designed for you to quickly bring your child into their classroom and leave. If you are planning to stay for a while, volunteer, or have an appointment, please park in the parking lot next to the Center.

PHOTOGRAPHS

Photograph permission forms are signed during enrollment and shared with staff. Photographs or video-tapes of your child participating in our programs may be taken from time to time. They may be hung in the center, placed in a photo album and appear in newspapers. Any photos posted on our website, Facebook, or used for advertising will be shown to you and have your approval before being used.

DONATIONS

The Center accepts donations of any items in good condition. This ranges from items that could be used in the Parent Library, kitchen, classrooms (toys, books, and furniture), etc. If you received a gift or have an item that you no longer need, please think of us. This allows us to share resources and maintain variety.

NON-DISCRIMINATION POLICY

The Center admits children of any race, color, national and ethnic origin to all rights, privileges, programs, and activities.

GRIEVANCE PROCEDURES

The Center is committed to providing childcare in compliance with the Delaware Office of Children Day Care Regulations and in accordance with the standards set forth by the National Association for the Education of Young Children. The staff strives to work with you to provide your child with the best possible care. Should you have questions, concerns or comments, please contact your child's classroom teacher. If they are unable to assist you go to the Director.

CHILD CARE REGULATIONS

The reception area has posted copies of the Center's License. There is also a binder with the most recent licensing inspection report and other required notices. A copy of the Delcare "Rules for Early Care and Education and School-Age Centers" is available at the reception area and on the web.

Important Contact Information:

Local Child Care Licensing Office: (302) 739-5487

Child Abuse Hotline (800) 292-9582

Child Care Licensing Website http://kids.delaware.gov/pdfs/occl_reqs_dcc.pdf

