

First Steps Early Learning Center

Policies and Procedures

I. PHILOSOPHY

We believe that self-esteem is the critical component to optimal growth in young children. In order for a child, to develop high self-esteem, we focus on developing the socialization and self-help skills needed to succeed in other areas of development.

Children at First Steps are given the opportunity to explore, experiment, and create in a safe and nurturing environment.

In watching and talking with children we quickly find that they differ widely and that these individual needs must be met. Some children need more structure, while other children need freedom to explore. In order to accommodate for the individual need; the children are provided with an array of "hands on learning experiences which contribute to the child's physical, emotional, social and intellectual development. It is our philosophy that through this involvement in learning, the child will be provided with the most comprehensive educational background possible.

II. BEHAVIOR MANAGEMENT & DISCIPLINE POLICY

When a child is having a difficult time following directions or treating others with respect, developmentally appropriate guidance techniques are used. These techniques are as follows:

A. Positive Reinforcement: The child will be encouraged when he/she is demonstrating acceptable behavior.

B. Redirection: The child is redirected to another activity and given an opportunity to try again at another time.

C. “When...Then” statements:

A statement in which the child is encouraged to accomplish something before going on to something else. Example: “When you finish picking up the blocks, then you can go outside.”

D. Take a Break: The child is separated from the group for a child-regulated period of time. This technique is used only when a child is exhibiting temper tantrum type behavior or hurting self, others, or equipment. When the child shows that he/she is ready to demonstrate acceptable behavior, the child is encouraged to join the rest of the group and try again.

III. HOURS OF OPERATION

Hours of operation are 6:30 a.m. to 6:00 p.m. Monday- Friday.

IV. HOLIDAYS

A. First Steps will be closed for the following holidays:

B. Thanksgiving Day and the day after (Friday)

C. New Year's Day, Memorial Day, Fourth of July, Labor Day, Christmas Eve, and Christmas Day, New Year's Eve at noon. Good Friday.

D. There will be no deduction in the weekly fee when a holiday occurs.

V. ADMISSION PROCEDURE

A. Ages of admission are 6 weeks to 6 years of age.

B. We attempt to be flexible in our enrollment policies to suit the individual needs of our families.

C. Children are accepted subject to availability of space.

- D. All required forms must be completed and returned to the Director on or before the child's first day.
- E. A registration-fee of \$75 is to be paid upon enrollment. This fee is non-refundable and is to be paid once a year.
- F. First Steps reserves the right to terminate a child's spot if we feel that the program is not meeting the child/s needs.
- G. The Director shall be notified two weeks in advance should a parent choose to withdraw their child.

VI. ARRIVAL AND DEPARTURE PROCEDURE

- A. All children must be delivered into the hands of a teacher upon arrival. This is for your child's safety.
- B. The parent or other authorized person must sign the child in each day upon arrival. The child must also be signed out each day before his/her departure.
- C. No child will be released to anyone not authorized by the child's parent; proper ID must be presented.

VII. FEES

- A. There will be no deduction in fees when a child is absent, **or** when a holiday/weather day occurs.
- B. One week vacation will be allowed per school year if the child is absent the entire week. A vacation week cannot be used during the first three months of attendance, without prior permission from the director.
- C. Tuition payments may be paid on a weekly, bi-weekly, or monthly basis. All fee must be paid in advance. Weekly and bi-weekly fees will be considered delinquent after Wednesday. Monthly fees will be considered delinquent after the 5th of the month.

VIII. LATE FEES

- A. A fee of \$5.00 will be charged for delinquent tuition payments.
- B. For pickups after 6 pm, a charge of \$5.00 for every 5-minute increment will be charged.
- C. There will be a \$15.00 service charge for returned checks.

IX. HEALTH AND MEDICAL INFORMATION

- A. Each child shall have on file, a current record of immunization.
- B. Your child will not be able to attend if he/she has a severe cold, an undetermined rash, or a fever of 101 degrees or higher, diarrhea, or vomiting.
- C. Children are required to be fever free for 24 hours before returning to the center.
- D. If your child becomes ill while at daycare and in the parent or authorized person cannot be notified and emergency treatment is necessary, the child will be taken to the emergency room, or to the child's personal physician by the director, a teacher, or an ambulance.
- E. If it is absolutely necessary, medication will be given at the center, but only when the required authorization form is completed. Medication must be in the original container and with the child's name and dosage. The medication must be in a zip lock bag.

X. CHILDREN'S SUPPLIES

Parents are requested to label and supply the following items necessary for the proper care of your child:

1. A full extra set of-clothes.
2. A nap mat and small blanket to be used at rest time.
3. Wipes (infant and toddlers }
4. Diapers (infants and toddlers)
5. Formula and baby food for infants, (if the child eats table food it will be provided by First Steps.)

XI EMERGENCY PLANS

- A. Fire Drills will be conducted on a monthly basis. In the event of an actual fire, the drill procedures will be followed.
- B. Weather: When watches or warnings are issued, procedures outlined by the Emergency Management Agency will be followed.
- C. Power Failure/Heat Failure: Proper equipment is kept in the center at all times for use in the event of a power failure. In the event that power is out for an extended period of time, parents will be notified.

XII. WEATHER DAYS

In the event of inclement weather, it will be our policy to close, if the roads are hazardous. We will announce any closings on the local radio stations. No deduction in fees will be allowed on such days.

XIII. HOME/CENTER COOPERATION

- A. We have an "Open Door" policy. Parents have free access at all times to all areas used by the children.
- B. It is suggested that comfortable play clothing be worn by the children to school.
- C. We ask that children not bring toys from home into the center, without permission from the teacher. (example: Show and Tell) The center will not accept any responsibility for toys, books, etc. that are brought into the school.
- D. A copy of "Minimum Standards for Day Care Centers" may be obtained from the State Department of Human Resources.
- E. Complaints from parents are to be discussed with the Director.

XIV. MEALS & SNACKS

First Steps will provide a morning snack to all children, an afternoon snack, and a balanced lunch. All children arriving prior to 9:00 am, will be offered breakfast. A menu will be posted each week in our main hall.

Birthdays: Parents are welcome to prepare special treats for your child's class.