

FAMILY HANDBOOK

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HEALTH PRACTICES

Precautions

The health of our student's is extremely important to us. Our staff demonstrates the important personal skills that are needed in order to keep children healthy and help stop the spread of illness. Children are taught to wash their hands after toileting, before and after meals, when coming in from outside and as needed.

Dress Code

Parents are to ensure their child is dressed appropriately each day. When dressing your child, please keep in mind the outdoor climate. We ask that all children wear closed toed shoes (preferably sneakers) for safety reasons. Inappropriate shoes or clothing may prevent your child from participating in certain activities. Each child should have at least TWO (2) change of clothes (including socks) at all times, in a labeled bag. We request that each article of clothing



be labeled with your child's first and last name. We cannot be responsible for damaged or lost items.

Diapers and Potty Training

At least ONE (1) week supply of disposable, labeled diapers and wipes must be provided for your child if they are not yet potty trained.

Potty training is an exciting time for children! Our staff is fully prepared to help your child become toilet trained. Every effort will be made to continue the process of toilet training that was started by the parent to ensure consistency. It is expected that accidents may happen along the way, this is all part of the process. We do not express anger or disapproval, or scold, shame or punish. Your child will be cleaned up calmly and reassured of their efforts to use the toilet.

For these reasons, we ask that you provide us with at least TWO (2) complete changes of clothing and a supply of disposable diapers/pull ups and wipes during the training process. All soiled clothing will be placed and sealed in a disposable bag and given to you at pick-up.

Allergies

During enrollment, you will be provided with an Allergy form. Please indicate any allergies your child may have. We take every precaution to make sure that children who have any kind of allergy are protected.

Illnesses

If your child is feeling ill, shows symptoms of; Chickenpox, Croup, Diarrhea, Excessive Cold/Coughing, Fever (exceeding 100.5F), Flu, Head Lice, Measles, Meningitis, Mumps, Pinkeye, Ringworm, Strep Throat, Thrush, Vomiting, Greenish/milky secretions from the body/nose/eyes, or any type of contagious/communicable illness, your child must be kept at home. This will prevent exposure to the other children in the program who are not ill. **Your child must be symptom free for 24 hours before returning to the center; there are NO**



EXCEPTIONS. If your child arrives ill in the morning, we reserve the right to refuse services. This is to ensure the other children attending the center will not be exposed to an ill child. In the event that your child becomes ill and needs to be sent home, a parent or authorized escort will be required to pick up the child. Your child will be made comfortable in an isolated area of the office (but remain supervised) until a parent/guardian/escort arrives. Parents will be informed of any instance of contagious disease that affects children who may have been exposed at the center. The local health authorities will be contacted if there is an outbreak or it is a reportable illness. Unfortunately, no refunds will be given for days a child misses due to illness.

Medication

A medication authorization form must be completed prior to any prescription medicine being administered. To ensure the proper administration of medications to your child, please give all prescription medication to the director, who will then store it safe and securely. Medicine will only be administered if the frequency requires more than two times a day. We unfortunately do not give over the counter medicine such as Tylenol, Advil, etc. With a signed consent form (noting any potential reactions), we do permit sunscreen, insect repellent and diaper ointment, if needed. These items are to be provided by the family. Sunscreen and insect repellent will be administered at the teacher's discretion prior to participating in outdoor activities. Diaper ointment will also be administered at teacher's discretion during diaper changes. Manufacturer's instructions will be followed. Staff members are CPR certified. The labeled dosage will be followed to ensure proper administration. All medications must be in their original packing and labeled with:

- ✓ Child's first and last name
- ✓ Medication name
- ✓ Dosage
- ✓ Frequency
- ✓ Duration (ex: days to be given)
- ✓ Expiration Date

All medications left at the center after the expiration date/time allotted will be disposed of by center's staff.



Medical Records/Vaccinations

All current medical and immunization records for your child **MUST** be submitted by your child's first day. Our staff will keep you informed when immunizations need to be updated. Medical records/vaccinations must be up to date in order for your child's enrollment to remain in "good standing."

Injuries

If your child is injured, you will be informed by telephone or given a written report upon pick up, depending on the injury. In the event of a minor injury, trained staff will perform proper first aid care and you will be informed at pick up about the injury. At this time you may want to consult with your physician to decide whether the nature of the injury requires attention. In the event that a more serious injury occurs, such as a head/facial injury, a bite that breaks the skin, and a fall greater than the height of the child, you will be notified immediately. In case of an emergency that needs medical attention, staff will call 911 and you will be notified immediately. We will use the emergency medical form that was signed during enrollment, authorizing us to act on your behalf if you cannot be reached, allowing for no delay in your child's treatment.

Biting

It is our goal at First Steps to have minimal biting incidents. Toddlers can sometimes use biting as a form of communication. If your child is bitten by another child, we will comfort and care for them immediately. If your child bites another child, we will develop a plan to correct the behavior. If biting is excessive, to protect other children, you may be asked to temporarily remove your child or he/she may be dis-enrolled from the program.

Confidentiality

We respect the privacy and confidentiality of each family regarding health, behavior and developmental information.

Suspected Child Abuse and Neglect



First Steps employees are mandated reporters and are required by law to report any suspicions of child abuse or neglect to the proper authorities.

SCHOOL POLICIES

Sign- In/Out

For the safety and security of your child, all children must be signed in and out by a parent/guardian or authorized personnel. At the time of enrollment you will be equipped with an emergency card that indicates who is authorized to drop off/pick up your child. Anyone other than the parent/guardian must present a photo I.D when picking up the child, which we will keep on file for future pick-ups. If your child is picked up by a person other than the parent/guardian or other authorized person, the Center requires written permission by the parent/guardian and a photo ID in order to release your child. If a child arrives late or is picked up early, there is no deduction in tuition. Unless the center has a written court order on file, either parent has the right to pick up or drop off the child.

***Please be sure to sign your child in/out at the front desk.**

Schedule for students

In order to establish appropriate child/staff ratios, an accurate classroom attendance must be created. During enrollment, you will be asked to complete the following form. Part time and Full time options are available:

*Schedules are available for 2, 3, 4 or 5 days.

**One week notice is required to make any schedule changes.

***Unfortunately, Part Time is not available for infants. We do not share cribs, therefore we require full time enrollment.



Open Door Policy

We encourage families to visit at any time. During business hours, custodial parents/guardians are granted access to the school. Please check in with the front desk so that the Director can assist you during your visit.

Tuition and Fees

Upon enrollment, a tuition agreement form will be distributed outlining your child's schedule and fees. Tuition for weekly payers is due on the first day of each week. A late fee will be charged if the payment is not made by the end of the second day of each week. Tuition cannot be refunded or pro-rated. Full tuition must be paid whether absence is due to illness, holidays or inclement weather.

Registration: There will be an annual registration fee to be paid every September.

Tuition is subject to increase each September.

Please keep in mind that tuition must remain in good standing in order for your child to continue attending. Thank you!

Payment Methods

Payment is accepted in the form of check, cash or credit card. Please make checks payable to **First Steps**. In the event of a returned check, a late fee will be assessed by the center.

Discounts/Credits

We offer the following discounts to our families:

- 10% sibling discount
- Refer a friend and receive 1 week FREE!*
- Vacation Credit*

*To receive the "refer a friend" credit, the child must be enrolled for four (4) consecutive weeks. At this time, the one week credit will be assessed to your account. Please remember that your friend(s) must notify us at the time of their child's enrollment that you referred them in order for you to receive credit. (Tuition credit applies towards one child per family).



*The vacation credit is to encourage families to spend time together. A child is eligible for a vacation credit on the anniversary of their enrollment date, then each continuous year after. While the vacation credit is in use, your child is unable to attend the Center. You must notify the center two (2) weeks prior to using the vacation week.

Hours of Operation

The regular operating hours of the Center are Monday – Friday from 6:30 a.m. to 6:30 p.m.

After Hours Policy

We appreciate your efforts of picking up your child promptly each day, but understand unexpected situations arise. If a parent is late, we will call them to make sure they are on their way. In the event that we cannot get in touch with the parent, we will begin calling contacts from the emergency card. First Steps staff are not permitted to remove the child from school or transport them to a different location. If all contacts are unavailable we will contact the appropriate community authorities. Unfortunately, late fees will be assessed in these instances.

Policy on the Release of Children

Each child may be released only to the child's parent(s) or person(s) authorized by the parent(s) to take the child from the center and to assume responsibility for the child in an emergency if the parent(s) cannot be reached.

If a non-custodial parent has been denied access, or granted limited access, to a child by a court order, the center shall secure documentation to that effect, maintain a copy on file, and comply with the terms of the court order.

If the parent(s) or person(s) authorized by the parent(s) fails to pick up a child at the time of the center's daily closing, the center shall ensure that:

1. The child is supervised at all times;
2. Staff members attempt to contact the parent(s) or person(s) authorized by the parent(s); and
3. An hour or more after closing time, and provided that other arrangements for releasing the child to his/her parent(s) or person(s) authorized by the parent(s), have failed and the staff member(s) cannot continue to supervise the child at the center, the staff



member shall call the 24-Hour State Central Registry Hotline 1-877-NJ-ABUSE(1-877-652-2873) to seek assistance in caring for the child until the parent(s) or person(s) authorized by the child’s parent(s) is able to pick-up the child.

If the parent(s) or person(s) authorized by the parent(s) appears to be physically and/or emotionally impaired to the extent that, in the judgement of the director or staff member, the child would be placed at risk of harm if released to such an individual, the center shall ensure that:

1. The child may not be released to such an impaired individual;
2. Staff members attempt to contact the child’s other parent or an alternative person(s) authorized by the parent(s); and
3. If the center is unable to make alternative arrangements, a staff member shall call the 24-hour State Central Registry Hotline 1-877-NJ ABUSE (1-877-652-2873) to seek assistance in caring for the child.

For school-age child care programs, no child shall be released from the program unsupervised expect upon written instruction from the child’s parent(s).

Holiday Closings

The Center will be closed on the following days:

- | | |
|---|---|
| New Year’s Day | Martin Luther King Day |
| President’s Day | Good Friday |
| Memorial Day | Independence Day |
| Labor Day | Columbus Day |
| Veterans Day | Thanksgiving Break (Thursday and Friday)* |
| Christmas Break (Eve, day and day after)* | |

**Center may close early the day before this holiday.*

PLEASE NOTE: Tuition is due in full despite of holiday closings.



Toys from home

Each classroom is filled with sufficient learning materials for your child, so we ask that you leave toys and other personal belongings at home. Attachment objects are permitted (pacifier, blanket, etc.); however, other toys are not permitted in your child's classroom. We will assign specific sharing days, such as "Show and Tell," in which case an appropriate toy from home is permitted. No guns, swords or other war toys are allowed. Tablets/i-pads are also not-permitted. Please label your child's first and last name on the toy and be sure to bring it home the same day. We cannot be responsible for any lost items.

Activities, Parties, Celebrations

Please speak with the director about your child's birthday or other special occasions when you wish to provide a special snack and/or beverage. We encourage healthy treat choices while also keeping in mind allergies. Celebrations must be confirmed with the director.

Outside Employment for Staff

Our teachers are welcome to babysit when First Steps is closed. These arrangements are made directly between the teacher and parent. Please keep in mind that First Steps is not responsible for its employees away from the school and outside of their working hours.

Inclement Weather

Decisions to close the Center will be based on local school closings. In the event that the Center is closed there will be an announcement on the NEWS 12 NJ website (www.news12.com) and an email can also be sent to parents. If the Center is closing early due to inclement weather, the parent/guardian will be notified as soon as possible so that you can make appropriate arrangements. If we cannot contact you, we will begin to call emergency/authorized contacts. Your child will be safely cared for until he/she is picked up.

Emergency Evacuation and Drills



If an emergency occurs that requires evacuation, you will be notified as soon as possible to pick up your child. In order to prepare our students for such event, we will have emergency drills (such as a fire drill, evacuation drill, etc.) throughout the year to maintain our preparation.

Discipline

We believe that the best way to discipline a child is through positive reinforcement. Positive methods of discipline tell your children what they should do and build their self-esteem. One example of this is re-directing the child from the unwanted behavior. All methods of redirection are based on the child's age and ability to develop and maintain self-control. Children may be removed from a group activity under supervision of another staff member until they are ready to participate again.

Staff members shall not discipline a child for failing to eat or for soiling themselves. Staff shall not use hitting, shaking, abusive language or any other form of emotional/corporal punishment while re-directing children. Staff shall not withhold food, emotional response or the opportunity to sleep/rest.

Withdrawal

We require at least two (2) weeks' notice if you wish to withdrawal your child from the program. You must complete and submit the withdrawal from two weeks prior to leaving. Without this, you will be charged for the full two weeks.

Termination

At First Steps, it is our goal to provide each child with a fun, safe and active learning environment. We do all that we can to work with our children and families if any problems or issues may arise. It is our goal to work on an action plan to fix any undesired behavior. However, we reserve the right to determine if your child's best interests are being served at our school. We try our best to avoid this, but must do so under extreme circumstances such as the following:

IMMEDIATE CAUSE FOR EXPULSION

The child is at risk of causing serious injury to other children or himself.



Parent threatens physical or intimidating actions towards staff members.
Parents exhibit verbal abuse to staff in front of enrolled children.

PARENTAL ACTIONS FOR CHILD'S EXPULSIONS

Failure to pay/habitual lateness in payments
Failure to complete required forms including the child's immunization records
Habitual tardiness when picking up your child.
Verbal abuse to staff.

CHILD'S ACTIONS FOR EXPULSION

Failure of child to adjust after a reasonable amount of time.
Uncontrollable tantrums/ angry outburst.
Ongoing physical or verbal abuse to staff or other children.
Excessive biting.
Any other inappropriate behavior.

SCHEDULE OF EXPULSION

If after the remedial actions above have not worked, the child's parent/guardian will be advised verbally and in writing about the child's or parent's behavior warranting an expulsion. An expulsion action is meant to be a period of time so that the parent/guardian may work on the child's behavior or to come to an agreement with the center.

The parent/guardian will be informed regarding the length of the expulsion period. If we need to terminate services, you will be notified in writing at least one week in advance.

Information to parents

Under provisions of the Manual of Requirements for Child Care Centers (N.J.A.C. 17:27), every licensed child care center in New Jersey must provide to parents of enrolled children written information on parent visitation rights, State licensing requirements, child abuse/neglect reporting requirements and other child care matters. The center must comply with this requirement by reproducing and distributing to parents this written statement, prepared by the Office of Licensing, Child Care & Youth Residential Licensing, in the Department of Children and Families (DCF). In keeping with this requirement, the center must secure every parent's signature attesting to his/her receipt of the information.



Our center is required by the State Child Care Center Licensing law to be licensed by the Office of Licensing, Child Care & Youth Residential Licensing, in the Department of Children and Families (DCF). A copy of our current license must be posted in a prominent location at our center. Look for it when you're in the center.

To be licensed, our center must comply with the Manual of Requirements for Child Care Centers (the official licensing regulations). The regulations cover such areas as: physical environment/life safety; staff qualifications, supervision, and staff/child ratios; program activities and equipment; health, food and nutrition; rest and sleep requirements; parent/community participation; administrative and record keeping requirements; and others.

Our center must have on the premises a copy of the Manual of Requirements for Child Care Centers and make it available to interested parents for review. If you would like to review our copy, just ask any staff member. Parents may secure a copy of the Manual of Requirements by sending a check or money order for \$5 made payable to the "Treasurer, State of New Jersey", and mailing it to: NJ Department of Children and Families, Office of Licensing, Publication Fees, PO Box 65Z, Trenton, NJ 08646-0657.

We encourage parents to discuss with us any questions or concerns about the policies and program of the center or the meaning, application or alleged violations of the Manual of Requirements for Child Care Centers. We will be happy to arrange a convenient opportunity for you to review and discuss these matters with us. If you suspect our center may be in violation of licensing requirements, you are entitled to report them to the Office of Licensing toll free at 1 (877) 667-9845. Of course, we would appreciate your bringing these concerns to our attention too.

Our center must have a policy concerning the release of children to parents or people authorized by parents to be responsible for the child. Please discuss with us your plans for your child's departure from the center.

Our center must have a policy about administering medicine and health care procedures and the management of communicable diseases. Please talk to us about these policies so we can work together to keep our children healthy...

Our center must have a policy concerning the expulsion of children from enrollment at the center. Please review this policy so we can work together to keep your child in our center.

Parents are entitled to review the center's copy of the Office of Licensing's Inspection/Violation Reports on the center, which are issued after every State licensing inspection of our center. If there is a licensing complaint investigation, you are also entitled to review the Office's Complaint Investigation Summary Report, as well as any letters of enforcement or other actions taken against the center during the current licensing period. Let us know if you wish to review them and we will make them available for your review.

Our center must cooperate with all DCF inspections/investigations. DCF staff may interview both staff members and children.

Our center must post its written statement of philosophy on child discipline in a prominent location and make a copy of it available to parents upon request. We encourage you to review it and to discuss with us any questions you may have about it.

Our center must post a listing or diagram of those rooms and areas approved by the Office for the children's use. Please talk to us if you have any questions about the center's space.

Our center must offer parents of enrolled children ample opportunity to assist the center in complying with licensing requirements; and to participate in and observe the activities of the center. Parents wishing to



participate in the activities or operations of the center should discuss their interest with the center director, who can advise them of what opportunities are available.

Parents of enrolled children may visit our center at any time without having to secure prior approval from the director or any staff member. Please feel free to do so when you can. We welcome visits from our parents.

Our center must inform parents in advance of every field trip, outing, or special event away from the center, and must obtain prior written consent from parents before taking a child on each such

Our center is required to provide reasonable accommodations for children and/or parents with disabilities and to comply with the New Jersey Law Against Discrimination (LAD), P.L. 1945, c. 169 (N.J.S.A. 10:5-1 et seq.), and the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA), P.L. 101-336 (42 U.S.C. 12101 et seq.). Anyone who believes the center is not in compliance with these laws may contact the Division on Civil Rights in the New Jersey Department of Law and Public Safety for information about filing an LAD claim at (609) 292-4605 (TTY users may dial 71 1 to reach the New Jersey Relay Operator and ask for (609) 292-7701), or may contact the United States Department of Justice for information about filing an ADA claim at (800) 514-0301 (voice) or (800) 514-0383 (TTY).

Our center is required, at least annually, to review the Consumer Product Safety Commission (CPSC), unsafe children's products list, ensure that items on the list are not at the center, and make the list accessible to staff and •parents and/or provide parents with the CPSC website at <http://www.cpsc.gov/Recalls>. Internet access may be available at your local library. For more information call the CPSC at (800)638-2772.

Anyone who has reasonable cause to believe that an enrolled child has been or is being subjected to any form of hitting, corporal punishment, abusive language, ridicule, harsh, humiliating or frightening treatment, or any other kind of child abuse, neglect, or exploitation by any adult, whether working at the center or not, is required by State law to report the concern immediately to the State Central Registry Hotline, toll free at (877) NJ ABUSE/(877) 652-2873. Such reports may be made anonymously. Parents may secure information about child abuse and neglect by contacting: DCF, Office of Communications and Legislation at (609) 292-0422 or go to www.nj.gov/dcf and select Publications.

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