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A Family Tree School-Age Enrichment Program

# Parent Handbook

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# *Welcome from Erica and Christine*

## ***OUR PROGRAM MISSION***

A Family Tree is a trusted leader in providing a high quality, nurturing and safe environment for children ages 6 weeks to 12 years old. Our program is designed to connect, educate, and inspire children to become actively involved in the learning process. Our early education teachers are well versed in teaching children through play. Our program uses a play-based curriculum designed to align with the Rhode Island Early Learning Standards. The use of the standards will expose your child to the nine domains and ensure a well-rounded education. Our daily communication with parents is just one way that we encourage parents to be part of their child's learning experience and create a strong home to school connection. As your child grows into our top-rated school-age program they will continue to develop independence, self-esteem, leadership skills and a love for our community. Our friendly and knowledgeable school and youth teachers use guidance from the National After-School Association to guide our after-school programming to ensure it meets the highest standards. Our program is one that values diversity, friendship, community, and most of all the strength and support of FAMILY.

## ***OUR GOAL***

At A Family Tree our goal is to provide a friendly and welcoming atmosphere. It is a place where the staff, parents and children feel like they are family.

## ***OUR STAFF***

The staff at A Family Tree is hired to meet the needs of the children. Our staff is caring, nurturing, has patience and understands what you as a parent want for your child. Our staff members are required to participate in thirty (30) hours or more of training, much more than the twenty hours required by DHS. Areas of training include but are not limited to: CPR, First Aid, classroom management, age-appropriate curriculum, quarterly company trainings, customer service, and Early Learning Standards.

## ***NON-DISCRIMINATION POLICY***

We do not discriminate due to gender, race, religion, cultural heritage, national origin, parent's marital status, sexual orientation, and political beliefs, physical or mental disability.

## ***LICENSING INFORMATION***

A Family Tree is licensed by the State of Rhode Island and is mandated to uphold all the rules and regulations pertaining to infants six weeks to twelve years old childcare licensing. Regarding our ratios, we make every effort to follow all the DHS regulations as stated in the regulations of Licensure including the child to staff ratio. The ratio for Infants 6 weeks-18 months is 4:1, 2-3 years is 6:1, 3 years is 9:1, 4 years is 10:1 and 5 years is 12:1. All of our locations have earned additional quality stars for more information check [www.Brightstars.org](http://www.Brightstars.org).

# **POLICIES AND PROCEDURES**

## **ENROLLMENT**

### ***Forms***

All parents must complete an application form for each child enrolled in the program. You will be given a packet of paperwork to fill out with all pertinent information about your child. This packet must be filled out completely before your child can start at the center. The medical forms must be completed and signed by your child's physician. At least once a year you will receive a form for updating any information and immunization forms, however, it is safer for all concerned if you remember to notify the center of any changes immediately. To complete enrollment registration forms must be fully completed and returned to the center and include a meeting with the Director/Coordinator, a tour of the facility and a parent and child orientation. A registration fee of \$75.00 for the first child and \$50.00 for each additional child. All payments are made through ProCare, our self-service payment app and portal discussed later in this document.

### ***Children's Records Requirements***

In addition to the above mentioned, no child may begin attending A Family Tree without current immunizations from the child's physician. The immunization form must show that all shots required for the age of the child have been administered and that a current lead test has been performed. If at any time a child has not had the required immunization and tests a written letter from the physician on letterhead must be submitted to the center as a waiver. Yearly reports are the responsibility of the parent to provide to the center including updated immunizations.

### ***Changes in registration information and schedules***

Any changes in the registration information concerning you and your child must be arranged on an ongoing basis with the Director/Coordinator (i.e., changes in pick up authorization, addresses, work or home phone numbers, emergency contacts) If you need to change your child's schedule (i.e., days your child attends etc.) changes can only be accommodated if space allows. When parents are enrolled, they are informed of our policies regarding custody disputes and restraining orders. Please supply the center with all current restraining orders and/or custody agreements pertaining to the enrolled child.

### ***Registration for summer camp (school age program)***

Registration is first offered to the existing families, then to the established waiting list and later to the public. Enrollment capacities are dictated by the DCYF Licensing Unit. The first summer camp enrollment registration packets will be available to enrolled parents first. There will be an open enrollment during the months of May to June. All registrations must include a yearly fee of \$75.00 registration fee for the first child and \$50.00 for each additional child.

## **ARRIVAL AND DEPARTURE**

### ***Attendance***

Attendance will be taken at the time of the child's arrival. Staff will note any unusual arrival or departure times. Electronic Sign-in/out sheets will include the following information: Date, Child's name, Time In, Time out, Full Signature. Parents of DHS who do not sign in/out may be responsible for full payment. If DHS completes an audit and there is no signature, they may revoke payment. Children cannot exceed 50 hours per week or the selected hours. Children cannot attend if it is not their scheduled day unless the Director/Owner gives prior approval. All students must be dropped off no later than 9:00 am unless prior authorization. We do permit a thirty (30) minute grace period until 9:30 but any drop-offs after that timeframe must be approved by the director and notified twenty-four (24 hours) in advance.

### ***Authorized Pick-Up Policy***

A pick-up Authorization Form must be completed by the parent prior to the child's enrollment at the childcare program. If a child is to be picked up by someone other than the authorized person, the Center must be notified in writing. Parents or designated persons picking up children **MUST** come into the building and sign the child out. For your child's safety we will not allow your child to leave the site without an authorized person. A valid photo ID will need to be presented before the child can be released. Our preference of course is for you to tell us in person that someone else will be picking up your child; however, we know that emergencies do arise. If in an emergency, it is necessary for you to call in to notify the staff that someone else will be picking up your child you must identify that you are in fact who you say you are.

The procedure is as follows: the staff member will ask you to provide the medical ID Insurance information that you filled out upon enrolling. You will be asked the name of the Insurance Company, the policy number, and the name of the policyholder. It is imperative that we have in our possession any copies of restraining orders, legal documents pertaining to a child and/or current custodial or guardian papers if they are made by the decision of the courts. We cannot comply with your wishes without these documents. All persons authorized must be 18 years of age or older and have a valid ID.

### ***Safe Release of Children***

Please be aware that if a staff member suspects you have been consuming alcohol/drugs you will be asked to have someone else pick up your child. Your child will **NOT** be released to anyone believed to be under the influence.

### ***Drop off- Pick up Times***

Opening until 9:30 am

Last parents pick up 5:25 pm to ensure time to close & tidy up the centers.

### ***Late Pickup Policy***

On certain occasions when a parent must be late, we have established these firm policies.

- Parents must call the center to let us know what time they expect to arrive or to inform us of alternate transportation arrangements that have been made.
- Parents will be assessed a \$10.00 late fee for the first five minutes when they are late past the scheduled pick-up time. There will be an additional \$1.00 per minute after the first fifteen minutes late. The clock at the child's care site will be used to determine the fee charged. The late fee is expected at the time of pick up or no later than the next day. ***Strictly enforced.***
- In the event of consistent tardiness, a case conference will be convened to discuss possible alternatives.
- Three (3) consistent cases of tardiness may result in your child's termination from the program.
- If the center does not receive a prior phone call from the parent, the following procedures will be immediately implemented:
- A staff member will contact parents for instructions. If contact cannot be made a staff member will call the emergency contact list to arrange pick up. (Parents will be charged \$1.00 per minute if the emergency contact person is late.)
- If by 6 pm contact cannot be made with the child's emergency contact people, a call will be placed to the DCYF Emergency Unit to report the abandoned child. Staff members will then follow instructions given by DCYF as to what further arrangements are necessary.
- Parents will be informed to contact DCYF for further instructions.

### ***Inclement Weather and/or School Closing Policy***

Every effort will be made to open the center during inclement weather. The centers' opening may be delayed, ensuring the safe arrival of our staff. We will use the guideline of 4 (four) inches or more of snow or State of Emergency to determine if the center will be open that day. For confirmation, please watch Channel 10 or 12 for delays or closing. We will also post on Facebook page and on ProCare.

Holiday Schedule: the facility will close for the following nine State holidays:

|                        |               |                  |
|------------------------|---------------|------------------|
| New Years Day          | Juneteenth    | Columbus Day     |
| Martin Luther King Day | July 3rd &4th | Veterans Day     |
| Presidents Day         | VJ Day        | Thanksgiving Day |
| Memorial Day           | Labor Day     | Christmas Day    |

2 Teacher PD days- Dates will vary, parents will be given two (2) months prior notice.

Also, the facility closes early on Christmas Eve at 1pm and New Year's Eve at 4pm  
We will be closed on Friday or Monday for any holiday that falls on a Sunday. We will post holiday closings prior to the holiday to enable you to plan your schedules accordingly.  
Teachers receive paid holidays and parents are responsible for a full week of enrolled tuition.

## ***Vacation Week***

All families have (5) five weeks' vacation during the year (January through December). A full week must be taken to qualify for a vacation credit. Once vacation weeks are exhausted, tuition for all additional vacation weeks must be paid in full. However, if you have exhausted all (5) five weeks' vacation you are responsible to pay your weekly tuition.

To request vacation, you must submit a completed form given to your center Director no later than one (1) week in advance. Please do not send information outside of the request form (i.e., Facebook, text etc.) This form can be obtained in person or from our website. If a request is not submitted one (1) week prior, you will be billed for that week. No refunds will be given.

## **Health and Safety**

### ***Emergency Procedures***

Children experiencing minor injuries such as bumps, bruises, scrapes, bee stings and stomach upsets will be treated by staff who have received First Aid training. The staff will document the current state and wellbeing of the child. Staff will fill out an incident form in ProCare. A copy will be retained for the center's records and a copy to the parents if they desire one. Parents will be informed of all First Aid given to their child. If their child's symptoms persist, parents will be asked to pick up their child.

In case of a major emergency such as broken bones, puncture wounds etc. the child will be taken by ambulance to the nearest emergency medical facility. Health forms on file will include child and parent information, emergency numbers for when parents cannot be reached and a medical release to seek treatment if parents cannot be reached.

If a child is injured on a field trip location a staff member certified in First Aid will assess the injury and instruct a fellow staff member to obtain the child's emergency contact number, contact an ambulance (if necessary), parent, guardian or emergency contact person and the centers administrative staff. The child will then be transported by ambulance to the designated medical facility accompanied by a staff member. The staff member will stay with the child until his/her parent, guardian or emergency contact person arrives at the medical facility.

### ***Emergency Evacuation Plan***

Each childcare center has a specific plan for emergency evacuation. Please see your center Director for the center's emergency procedures. We practice monthly fire drills and quarterly lock down drills.

### ***Field Trip Transportation Plan***

Children participating in field trips from the Family Tree Program will be transported in the center vehicles, rented vehicles, or transported by foot. The Center is responsible for your child during transportation on field trips. In the event a vehicle should break down, alternative transportation will be secured at the branch with center vehicles or rental vehicles. All groups visiting an offsite facility will be responsible for travel First Aid and emergency procedures. At least one person on the field trip will be certified in First Aid and CPR. Parents who would like to chaperone, must have a fingerprint, BCI & sex offender check from the Attorney General's office. This must be within the last two years.

## *Clothing*

Children at the center are active and involved. They should wear clothes that are seasonally appropriate, comfortable, and practical and wash easily. All belongings should be labeled with the child's name, and we ask parents not allow their child to bring in unnecessary items. A Family Tree is not responsible for lost or damaged clothing. Please check the "Lost and Found" area for any lost items. Please send your child to the program with an extra set of clothing in case of accidents.

## *Sickness*

Please keep your child home if he/she seems listless, unusually irritable, complains of aches, is feverish or seems to be unusually pale or flushed. It is better to be overcautious than to risk exposing the rest of the children and staff. The following is a guideline for you to follow in determining when to keep your child at home.

Children should be kept home for:

- Open or drainage, sores, wounds, incisions etc.
- Earache
- Fever free for 24 hours (a fever is anything 100.6 or greater)
- Strep throat
- Stomachache
- Anything that is contagious i.e., chickenpox, hand, foot & mouth disease, pink eye etc.
- Diarrhea/vomiting
- Rashes that are contagious (i.e., impetigo, scabies)
- Head Lice –until child has been treated and is nit-free.
- The child is unable to keep up with the pace of the day.
- There may be times when a child is not allowed to return to the center without a release from his/her physician. Consult with the school nurse or director for additional information and/or directions.

Child May Come With:

- Earaches, strep throat (provided they have been on medication for 24 hours or have had three doses) Child must return with medical plan of treatment.
- Colds- Providing there is no excessive cough, sneezing, running nose, congestion, and/or fever.
- Hay fever
- The child can keep up with the pace of the day.
- Negative COVID test if symptoms are present or cleared by a physician for ongoing symptoms.

Each child responds and reacts differently to illness, so please be advised that the teachers, nurse, and Director may need to send children home if they are unable to keep up with the pace of the day. Children with temps 99 degrees or over will be contacted immediately.

If your child is at the center and becomes ill, exhibits a temperature, is vomiting, diarrhea x 3 over the course of the day or at the discretion of the onsite nurse, you will be required to pick up your child immediately. If the child does not respond to Tylenol or Motrin in one (1) hour, arrangements to have the child picked up must be made immediately. While policy indicates vomiting and diarrhea episodes be three (3) over the course of the day the nurse discretion has the final decision. Please be aware these guidelines are set forth to help maintain



the health and safety of your child and other children as well. In some cases, a clearance note from the child's pediatrician may be needed before your child can return to the program. Some examples may include strep throat, pink eye, scabies, and any other highly contagious illness. If you need clarification regarding illness policies, please feel free to speak to our center Director.

Please notify the center immediately if your child has been exposed to a contagious disease. The Director/Site Coordinator will notify you when it is necessary to keep your child at home. All parents will be given notice if a child in the program has been reported to have a contagious disease. Notices will include information on symptoms and general information on the contagion. Once the parent is notified the child(ren) must be picked up within the hour.

### ***Administration of Medication***

Only emergency medication such as epi-pen, inhaler, insulin, eye drops.

- All prescriptions medication must have a written order from the child's physician.
- All medication must be in its original container with all pertinent information displayed.
- The center program will keep written record of administration of all medications.
- The center will store all medications under proper conditions for sanitation, security, and safety.
- A written Asthma Action Plan must accompany all asthma medication.

### ***Nutritional Needs***

A Family Tree is currently Peanut Free. We recommend using sun butter as a great alternative. In keeping with the Bright Stars guidelines students who opt to bring in a hot lunch may do so with the use of a thermos. Previously prepared foods that require 45 seconds or less can be brought in. However, we are unable to prepare foods such as Mac & Cheese for example, which requires longer preparation and cooking time.

A Family Tree Program shall collaborate with parents to help ensure that the children's nutritional needs are being met in accordance with USDA requirements. Parents are expected to provide a nutritious breakfast, lunch, and snacks for their children (a nutritious lunch would include something from all four food groups. In addition, the center will follow parental or physician's orders in relation to special diets.

### ***Allergies***

Any allergies to foods, medications, chemicals, or other materials MUST be listed in the "Allergies" section of the child's information form. Please include any reactions and treatment of allergies. This information will be placed on a master list and posted throughout the center. All staff will be informed of the child's allergies and instructed to avoid these products.

## **School Age Summer Camp**

All School Age children must be completely potty trained at our facility. If your child is recently transitioning from Pre-K to our School Age Program, please provide your child with an extra change of clothes in case of an accident. If it is an ongoing situation, a meeting will be held with the parent/guardian to work together to conclude a solution and provide necessary accommodations.

### ***Pool Rules and Regulations***

- No diving, jumping, flipping, or horseplay
- No glass or food in the swimming area
- Children are not permitted to swim alone
- No pushing or throwing other individuals into the pool
- No running around the pool area
- Long hair must be worn up in a ponytail or tied up in another manner
- Water shoes are strongly encouraged to be worn around the pool area

### ***Appropriate Dress Code***

- Closed toe shoes **MUST** be worn at all times
- Wet clothes and towels cannot be left in the lockers overnight. They must be brought home daily to dry.

All children are expected to bring a water bottle with them daily and have their name visible. Water bottles are to not be shared or borrowed from other students. We have refill stations inside and outside so children have easy access to fresh drinking water.

### ***Sunblock***

Sunblock must be provided by the parents. There is no sharing of sunblock. If sunblock is not provided, the school is not permitted to use or borrow another student's sunblock. This is to prevent allergic reactions and other rashes associated with different brands of sunblock. Unfortunately, due to this rule if sunscreen is not provided it will not be applied throughout the day. Sunscreen must be labeled with your child's name.

### ***NO HEAT UPS***

During the summer months we often go on field trips, eat outside, and have large group sizes. It is impossible to adequately heat up over eighty (80) lunches in an hour time frame. Please feel free to use thermoses or bring alternative lunches like sandwiches, Lunchables, etc. Children are not permitted to share food with other students to reduce allergic reactions and the spread of germs.

## **Child Abuse and Neglect**

### ***Mandated Reporting***

We are licensed by the State of Rhode Island and mandated to report all suspicions of child abuse and /or neglect. Any suspected case of child abuse and/or neglect shall be reported to all the Department of Children, Youth and Families (1-800-RICHILD) in accordance with state law. Our staff complies with the necessary education criteria set forth by the State of Rhode Island and the Regulations of Licensure. We have an orientation and training program that each staff member is required to attend upon employment.

To ensure the well-being of the children in our care, our staff has a continuing duty under state law to report incidents of possible neglect or abuse, including physical, sexual, and psychological abuse, to the Department of Children, Youth and Families and to cooperate in any investigation of such possible neglect or abuse. We do not have discretion in this matter but must make such referrals whenever we have reasonable cause to believe that a child might have been harmed by anyone, including non-family members and we may be subject to criminal penalties if we fail to report such possible harm. Moreover, in grievous cases, we may refer the matter directly to the police or consult with the District Attorney.

As a childcare program, we are mandated by Rhode Island State Law to report all incidents of suspected child abuse or neglect to the Department of Children, Youth and Families. If a case of child abuse is suspected by a staff member or in the care of a staff member the following procedures have been put in place.

### ***A Family Tree Procedures for reporting Suspected Child Abuse***

The center advocates a positive guidance and discipline policy with an emphasis on positive reinforcement prevention and the development of self-discipline. At no time will the following disciplinary techniques be tolerated: physical punishment, striking, biting, kicking, squeezing, shaming, withholding restroom privileges, confining children in small, locked rooms or verbal or emotional abuse.

Affectionate touch and the warm feelings it brings are important factors in helping a child grow into a loving and peaceful adult. However, staff and volunteers need to be sensitive to each person's need for personal space (i.e., not everyone wants to be hugged). The center encourages appropriate touch; however, at the same time it prohibits inappropriate touch or other means of sexually exploiting children. If there is an accusation or suspicion of child abuse, the center will take prompt and immediate action as follows:

- At the first report or probable cause to believe that child abuse has occurred, the individual will notify Program Director, who will then review the incident with his/her designate. If the Program Director is not immediately available, the individual should report to the senior staff member. This review by the supervisor cannot in any way deter the reporting of child abuse by the mandated reporter.
- The person receiving the initial report will be responsible for confirming the facts reported and the condition of the child on the day of the first report.
- Any staff member who has a question or concern about a child in the program can call directly to the Department of Children, Youth and Family services at 1-800-RI Child to call in the suspected abuse or neglect a report.
- Any staff or volunteer named in the report will, without exception, be suspended until the D.C.Y.F. has completed their investigations. If a positive finding dictates immediate termination will follow.
- It is not the responsibility of the program to provide proof of the alleged abuse or neglect; however, it is our duty to call in all concerns. D.C.Y.F. investigators will make the appropriate follow-up during their investigation.

- The parents or legal guardian of the child (ren) involved in the alleged incident will be promptly notified in accordance with the relevant state or local agency.
- Whether the incident or alleged offense takes place on or off the Center premises, it will be considered job related (because the youth- involved nature of A Family Tree).
- Reinstatement of the program volunteer or employed staff person will occur only after all allegations have been cleared to the satisfaction of the persons named.
- All staff and volunteers must be sensitive to the need for confidentiality with the handling of this information, and therefore, should only discuss the incident with the people named. All reports must be kept in a locked file.

## **Tuition Policies**

### ***Financial Information***

- In ProCare, childcare rates are charged weekly and are due the first of the week your child attends. Payments are made whether the child is out sick; the facility is closed due to a legal holiday, snow cancellations or over extended vacations not taken as vacation weeks. If payments are not made by Wednesday of the week a \$20.00 late fee will be imposed. Automatic debit withdrawal helps to avoid late fees by automatically paying tuition on a weekly basis.
- Parents whose payments are more than two weeks late will be asked to withdraw their child from the Family Tree program until the account is current.
- Parents are responsible for payment for holidays that fall on a student's scheduled day.
- Parents are responsible for payment when their child does not attend Family Tree program on their scheduled day.
- Parents are responsible to pay for extra days used and extended care.
- A non- refundable registration fee of \$75.00 for the first child and \$50.00 for each child. after will be required at the time of enrollment.
- Summer camp registration fees for school age children are \$75.00, first child \$50.00, each additional will be required at the time of enrollment to reserve your space. This annual registration is due yearly in July.
- Valid form of payment **must** be entered into ProCare. Please update new cards before they expire.
- The current published rate schedule will be provided upon inquiring about the program or on the first visit, whichever applies. To keep up with the cost of living, new supplies, teacher wages, published rates may increase in September of each year by 3% at their discretion.
- Due to insurance reasons the staff cannot open the center before our posted hours of operation. The facility closes at 5:30 pm. Please see the fee schedule for late pick up. Please respect our hours of operation.

### ***Financial Assistance***

- The tuition is based on covering the operating costs of the program. We make every effort to keep tuition reasonable while allowing us to provide quality programming. We accept DHS payments for qualified individuals who provide an active Certificate Number issued by the Department of Human Services office. The Certificate Number must be entered into the computer and be active before any childcare can begin attending the Center. Currently, we do not accept pending numbers without full tuition payment.
- If at any time a child attends the program before a valid certificate number is issued and active in the DHS system, the parent is responsible for the tuition payment.

- If the Certificate number becomes inactive by the DHS office, parents are responsible for the tuition payments until the DHS office issues a reapproved letter. Tuition payments made by the parent will be reimbursed when the DHS office reimburses the center. Any payments made during an inactive DHS period and the center does not get compensated for them from DHS, the parent will not be reimbursed. Ask the Director/Coordinator for more details.
- Foster Care- It is the responsibility of the foster parent to be aware of end dates and/or changes. You work with your worker to ensure no grapes one month before the end date.

### ***Transfer of Records***

Upon written request of the parent, the licensee shall transfer a copy of the child’s record to the parent or any other person the parent identifies when the child is no longer in the program.

## **ACTIVITIES AND CURRICULUM**

Our childcare program provides a variety of activities. Your child will be placed in age-appropriate groups. A schedule of group rotations is posted in the classrooms. The daily schedule is followed by each group. There is flexibility in the schedule for additional activities, field trips, visitors, and holiday programs. During the school year, memos to all parents will be posted on the parent board as well as health notices. We will utilize our Facebook page and ProCare also to relay important information. We have an open-door policy for parents & guardians to visit the classroom and check on your child or meet with your child’s teachers or administration.

Parents are encouraged to volunteer to chaperone on field trips. In The monthly newsletters we discuss family engagement activities to do at home. You can visit and follow our Pinterest board for many age-appropriate activities that support your child’s learning at home.

On the first day of each month, a calendar of activities and curriculum planned for that month will be given to you by the teachers. You will also receive a monthly newsletter providing any miscellaneous information plus items of interest. Upon enrollment you will receive a community calendar that lists the days that the center is closed along with all the family engagement events for the year for you to hang on your refrigerator. Summer Camp calendars and welcome letters are sent out to all campers’ families on the first day of summer camp at our School Age Program

We make every effort to follow all the DCYF regulations as stated in the regulations of Licensure including the child to staff ratio. The ratio for Infants 6 weeks-18 months is 4:1, 2-3 years is 6:1, 3 years is 9:1, 4 years is 10:1 and 5 years is 12:1.

### **Supervision**

The children are under constant supervision while at the center. The staff has been trained in all areas in a supervisory capacity. We have ongoing staff meetings and training to keep everyone up to date with concerns, questions, or changes of procedures. The safety of the children is always a priority.

There will always be at least two staff members on the premises when the children are present. No child will ever be left unattended. The staff knows where every child is always in their group. During staff changeover the

teachers communicate with each other regarding which children remain in the building. There will be two teachers at the pool whenever it is being used. One staff member will always be in or at the poolside. The staff will not allow any jumping, diving, or horseplay at the pool. Broken or unsafe toys or equipment from the center or outdoors will be removed immediately. Playground equipment will be used on an age-appropriate basis. There will be an hourly check of the inside and outside for possible choking hazards.

### ***Assessment***

In September at the beginning of the school year or upon entry to the program the teacher(s) and nursing team will conduct a baseline evaluation on each child. This evaluation provides the teachers, nurse, and parents with the proper insight for targeting the areas that need special attention. Assessments are completed to support and advance the children in the direction they need to go. Assessments are completed quarterly in all classrooms. In addition, report cards are issued in January and June. Infant rooms will not be issued report cards but will have assessments completed every quarterly by the nurse and classroom teachers to record developmental milestones. During the school year each child in the pre k room will complete a portfolio containing projects, achievements and advances they have gained throughout the year. Our goal is not only to teach your child the academics he/she will need in kindergarten but to also teach them to love learning. We prepare all our children for the move into kindergarten so they will be able to continue learning and enjoy new surroundings.

### ***Inclusive Environment***

All children are welcome at our center, and we will make every effort to accommodate the needs of all children. We collaborate with Early Intervention services for children ages 6 weeks to three (3) years old who will do an assessment when referred or recommended. Our facility is equipped with a handicap accessible building and restrooms. The Director will request, and review information given by the parent related to the child's participation in the program. Identification of specific accommodations required meeting the needs of the child which would be discussed as well as changes or modification for the child's participation in regular activities would be discussed as well as identification of any special equipment materials, ramps, or aids. If such accommodations will cause undue burden on the Family Tree Program, the parent will be notified in writing which would include reasons for the decision.

If a student requires additional services or has an IEP a meeting will be set with the Director to ensure we are

### ***Referral Plans***

Through the center's connections with various Social Services, we have information concerning possible referrals to social, mental health, educational and medical services including but not limited to dental checkups, hearing, or vision screening for families. Inquiries about these referral services should be made through the Child Care Director. If the staff has a concern about a child, the behaviors will be observed, recorded, and reviewed before a referral is recommended. A parent meeting will be set up to discuss the program's concerns and referral.

The program will provide parents with a written statement including the reason for recommending the referral for additional services, a summary of the program's observations related to the referral and any efforts the program may have made to accommodate the child's needs. The program shall aid the parents in making the referral and any follow up that may be necessary. The program has a list of referrals, see your child's Program Director for a copy.

### ***Behavior Management***

Rules for positive behavior are included in the section entitled “Children’s responsibilities” and are shared with parents prior to enrollment; Basic rules include respect for each other, the property of others, the facility, the child’s safety, and the security of the group.

Behavior Management is accomplished through a positive approach that respects the child as an individual. Discipline procedures are handled individually, usually with a mild consequence that is associated with the infraction. “Time Out” is used on a limited basis.

Progressive methods of Approved Discipline

Establish “House Rules”. Make sure they are stated in the positive; tell children what they can do. Older children should assist in implementing them.

- Allow transition time and warnings before consequences occur
- Give verbal warning/reminder
- Redirection
- Talk through the program with the child. The child is encouraged to suggest alternative solutions and assist in implementing them
- Time Out/Cool Down time (a quiet time for children in a designated place within view of the staff):
  - A) Remove child from activity
  - B) Ask the child to sit away from the group
  - C) After 1-2 minutes allow the child to return to the activity
- If behavior continues to be an issue, establish a behavior chart with the child
- Discuss problematic situations with the child’s parent(s) and incorporate his/her suggestions into the child’s behavior management plan
- For unsafe behavioral incidents, write an incident report and have it signed by the parent(s)
- Immediate suspension or expulsion may result when a child’s behavior endangers the safety of him/herself or other children in the program or when licensing regulated staff/child ratios are not sufficient to maintain the safety of the child

Severe behavioral issues are taken to the Director/Coordinator, contacts the parent(s) and sets up a conference. A solution is usually made together as to the outcome and/or disciplinary procedure to take place. The final step is for the Director, parent(s) and the older children to meet to clarify behavioral expectations for the future and a behavioral expectation contract may be drawn up.

In all cases suspension and/or expulsion of a child from the School Age Child Care Program is the final decision of the Child Care Director. Although a last resort suspension or expulsion may be necessary to ensure the safety of your child and of others in the group.

Restricted Methods of Behavior Management

- No spanking or other corporal punishment
- No cruel, unusual or severe punishment, humiliation, verbal or physical abuse, neglect or abusive treatment
- No denial of meals or snacks, drinks, rest or bathroom facilities as punishment
- No force feeding
- No punishment for soiling, wetting or not using the toilet or other excessive practices of toileting
- No punishment related to eating or not eating food

Any Center staff member who violates any of the above restricted methods will be immediately suspended until further investigation is completed by the center and Department of Children, Youth and Families.

## ***Childcare Biting Policies and Steps for Prevention and Intervention in a Toddler Classroom at Family Tree Childcare***

At Family Tree Childcare, we understand the importance of providing a safe and nurturing environment for your little ones. We recognize that biting incidents can occur among toddlers, and we have implemented comprehensive policies and steps to prevent and address such incidents effectively. Our informative tone aims to keep parents well-informed about our approach to childcare biting policies.

### **Prevention is Key:**

1. **Supervision:** Our highly trained and attentive staff members closely supervise toddlers at all times. This proactive approach ensures that any potential biting incidents are promptly addressed and prevented. Teachers will be required to take training specifically on the topic of biting.
2. **Structured Activities:** We organize a variety of engaging and age-appropriate activities to keep toddlers occupied and stimulated. By providing a structured environment, we minimize the likelihood of frustration and biting behaviors.
3. **Communication:** We encourage open and regular communication with parents. Our staff members discuss any concerns or behavioral patterns observed, ensuring that parents are aware of their child's progress and any potential biting issues.

### **Intervention Strategies:**

1. **Positive Reinforcement:** Our dedicated teachers use positive reinforcement techniques to encourage appropriate behavior. By praising and rewarding toddlers for their good behavior, we create a positive and supportive atmosphere that discourages biting.
2. **Redirection:** In the event of a biting incident, our staff members promptly intervene by redirecting the child's attention to a more appropriate activity. This helps to prevent further occurrences and teaches toddlers alternative ways to express themselves.
3. **Individualized Support:** We understand that each child is unique and may require different approaches. Our experienced teachers work closely with parents to develop individualized strategies to address biting behavior effectively.
4. **Communication and Documentation:** We maintain open lines of communication with parents, keeping them informed about any biting incidents that may occur. Additionally, we document each incident, including the circumstances, individuals involved, and steps taken to address the situation. This documentation helps us track patterns and implement appropriate interventions.

### **Parent Partnership:**

1. **Education:** We believe that educating parents about biting behaviors is crucial. We provide resources, workshops, and informative materials to help parents understand the underlying causes of biting and how to address it at home.



2. Collaboration: We value the input and expertise of parents in addressing biting incidents. By working together, we can create a consistent approach to behavior management, ensuring that toddlers receive consistent guidance both at home and in our childcare center.

At Family Tree Childcare, we prioritize the safety and well-being of your child. Our comprehensive childcare biting policies and steps for prevention and intervention in our toddler classrooms aim to create a secure environment where every child can thrive. We are committed to open communication, positive reinforcement, and collaboration with parents to address biting behavior effectively.

### ***Termination and Suspension Policy***

Parents must inform A Family Tree Program, two weeks in advance if they are withdrawing their child from the program. Parents who fail to do so will still be liable for payment. The Director/Owners reserve the right to terminate day care services with two-week advance notice to families. When the health welfare and safety of other children are at stake the Director reserves the right to suspend or terminate child care services immediately.

Possible reasons for suspension and/or termination of a child from day care services include:

- Repeatedly inappropriate behavior or language
- Inappropriate behavior considered to be harmful to your child, staff or others (Parents are still liable for payment for days suspended due to inappropriate behavior)
- Chronic tardiness at pick up time
- Chronic absenteeism
- Aggressive
- Biting Policy
- Parents Aggressive toward staff
- Overdue fees
- Other as determined and discussed with the Director

When possible, warnings and suspensions are used before termination is instituted. Incidents will be documented and shared with parents when possible. A reasonable effort is made to work with the family prior to termination. If any referrals are recommended or requested by the parent, the information will be documented in the child's file.

When a child is terminated from the program the staff shall try when possible, to prepare the child for termination in a manner consistent with his/her ability to understand. Suspension will not be for punishment or circumvent the referral requirements and will not be in violation of the licensing regulations. However, there may be incidents endangering the safety of your child, the staff or others which may result in immediate suspension or expulsion.

## **Children's Rights and Responsibilities**

Staff is responsible for ensuring that children enrolled:

- Have a safe and reliable environment free of hazards.
- Have use of all equipment and space on an equal basis, equipment will be in functioning condition.
- Have their ideas and feelings respected.
- Have opportunities to express their anger, frustration, disappointment, joy etc. in an appropriate manner.

- Have activities that allow participants to express their creative ability, as they explore and discover while developing to their fullest potential.
- Have an environment that offers a variety of choices: physical gross motor, quiet activities, indoor, outdoor active and passive areas, creative, dramatic play and exploration.
- Have staff members that care about them, enjoy being with them and help them grow.
- Are treated with care, respect, honesty, and responsibility.

Children need to be responsible for:

- Learning to take consequences for their own actions
- Displaying character development traits: caring, honesty, respect, and responsibility
- Respecting the rules that are established for them
- Controlling their anger so that their actions do not harm anyone
- Not willfully damaging any equipment or property in the building or anyone else's property
- Sharing equipment and facilities with all children in the program
- Remaining with staff member at all times and notifying staff if they need to go to another area
- Dressing appropriately for indoor and outdoor play
- Returning materials and equipment to the place they found them and before they start a new activity or go home

## **Parents Rights and Responsibilities**

### ***Parent input***

Parents are encouraged to discuss concerns with their child's Lead teacher or Site Coordinator. If they are not comfortable approaching the staff member, the parent and Director develop a plan together to work toward a resolution. An explanation will be provided to the parent when a parent makes suggestions as to the program or policy of a center and the suggestions are not adapted into the program. The program will decide whether the parental suggestions will be implemented.

Parents are encouraged to participate in the Parent Advisory Group.

Parents will receive a program evaluation form annually. We ask that you fill this form out and return it to the center. You will be evaluating the center, staff, the care your child receives, the comfort level of you and your childcare etc. We need to determine our effectiveness in meeting the needs of your children. We take your comments and concerns very seriously and continually strive to have the highest quality center as possible.

### ***Parent Visits and Conferences***

To ensure a quality program, we need your help. We encourage parents to visit at any time. During an annual open house, we discuss our philosophy and our curriculum within each classroom. Conferences may also be arranged by appointment to go over individual assessments as well as to discuss how your child is developing. Assessments are provided quarterly as well as a weekly progress report for pre-school age children and daily reports are provided for infants and toddlers.

Open and friendly communication is essential. Parent participation and input is welcomed. The children, staff and Director appreciate your creativity, ideas, and leadership in activities.

Parents' concerns or complaints about the program should be immediately directed to the Site Coordinator or Director. Details surrounding the parents' concern or complaint will be reviewed. Solutions will be discussed and an action plan will be implemented. Feel free to discuss any concerns or suggestions that you may have with the staff and/or the Director.

### ***Meeting prior admittance***

The administrator or his designee meets with the parent prior to admitting the child to the center. At the meeting, the parent will be provided with the following information:

- The center's written statements of purpose
- Types of services provided
- Behavior management
- Termination and suspension policy
- A list of suggested nutritious foods you could send for snack and meals
- The policy identifying and reporting child abuse and neglect; the transportation plan
- A copy of the health care policy
- Procedure for administration of medication
- Procedures for providing emergency health care and the illness exclusion policy
- A copy of the fee schedule

Parents should be given the opportunity to visit the center's classroom either at the time of the meeting or prior to the enrollment of the child.

### ***Children's Records***

All information contained in your child's file is privileged and confidential and cannot be released without your consent or court order. Authorized representatives from the Office of Child Care Services and the Department of Social Services and the local police department have the right and responsibility to review all records upon request.

### ***Access to the Record***

The parent shall have access to the child's record at reasonable times. In no event shall such access be delayed more than two (2) business days after the initial request.

### ***Amending the Record***

A new set of registration forms will be required once a year to ensure the center has updated information. Please notify the center of any changes to your information during the year enrolled.

### ***Transfer of Records/ Request for Copy of Documentation***

Upon written request of the parent a copy of the child's record shall be transferred to the parent or any other person the parent identifies. Requests for a copy of documentation may take up to five to seven (7) business days as files may be in storage.

## **Responsibilities of the Center**

### ***Providing Information to the Department of Children, Youth and Families***

The center must make available to the DCYF Office any information required to be kept and maintained under these regulations and any other information reasonably related to the requirements of these regulations. This includes information in the child's records. Authorized employees of DCYF are not to remove identifying case materials from the Center premises and are required to maintain the confidentiality of individual records.

### ***Reporting Abuse and Neglect***

All Center staff are mandated reporters. They are required by law to report suspected abuse and neglect to the DCYF Office or Program Administrator. The center must have written policies and procedures for reporting and must provide the written policy to you upon enrolment.

*Notification of Injury*

The Center must notify the parent immediately of any injury that requires emergency care. They must also notify the parent in writing if any first aid is administered to the child.

**WE CARE ABOUT YOUR CHILDREN VERY MUCH AND THEIR HEALTH, SAFETY AND WELL BEING IS VERY IMPORTANT TO US, AS IS YOUR COMFORT AND SECURITY LEAVING YOUR CHILDREN IN OUR CARE. WE HOPE WE MAKE THE TRANSITION FROM HOME TO OUR SCHOOL AS EASY AS POSSIBLE FOR YOU AND YOUR FAMILY.**

# **Parent Statement of Understanding and Receipt Slip**

The following information is important for the safety and protection of your child. Please read the information, sign the form, and return it to the Director.

I understand my weekly tuition fee and agree to pay this amount by the date it is due.

I also understand that I have an agreed upon schedule for this fee and I cannot change this schedule or change my fee without management authorization.

I understand that payments are due the first day of the week my child attends. A late fee of \$20.00 is charged when payments are not received by Friday of the week.

I understand that my child will not be allowed to leave the program with an unauthorized person. Any person authorized to pick up my child must either be listed on the appropriate form or other arrangements must be made by informing the office person of a change in pick up.

I understand that should a person arrive to pick up my child who appears to be under the influence of drugs or alcohol, the child's safety, staff may have no recourse not to contact the police. Please do not put staff in a position where they must make the judgment call.

I understand that the staff is mandated by state law to report any suspected cases of child abuse or neglect to the appropriate authorities for investigation.

I have my copy of the Family Tree Parent Handbook.

I agree to familiarize myself and my child with the information contained in this booklet and understand the statements above and agree to abide by them.

\_\_\_\_\_  
Parent/Guardian Signature

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

\_\_\_\_\_  
Child's Name

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date