



FAMILY HANDBOOK

ChildServe Childcare Center

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FAMILY HANDBOOK

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SECTION 1: INTRODUCTION

our purpose

ChildServe Childcare Centers are dedicated to partnering with families with children of all abilities to promote learning through developmentally appropriate activities in a quality, inclusive environment. Our mission is achieved through a strong commitment to five intrinsic values: care, integrity, trust, partnership, and excellence.

our curriculum and educational philosophy

ChildServe Childcare Centers promote learning through developmentally appropriate activities that encourage independence, confidence, creativity and responsibility. Our educational curriculum is based on the Creative Curriculum text. It features a variety of engaging activities and fun play experiences which help each child develop physically, intellectually, emotionally and socially. It is designed to help children reach their fullest potential with the goal of preparing them for the next level of learning. We strive to provide for each child's needs in a nurturing, healthy and safe environment.

licensing

All ChildServe Childcare Centers are licensed by the State of Iowa, Department of Human Services. A copy of Licensing Standards and Procedures form SS-0711 is available to parents upon request. Centers are inspected regularly by a childcare licensing consultant and our own field management staff to ensure that they meet or exceed health, safety and other state requirements, as well as the ChildServe standard of quality. Our centers partner with a childcare nurse consultant, sponsored by EveryStep, to promote best health and safety practices in all classrooms.

Our centers are committed to providing the highest quality care and education to children. We participate in Iowa's Quality Rating System (QRS) regulated by the Department of Human Services. Each center's certificate of achievement is proudly displayed on our family information board.

equal opportunity and non-discrimination

ChildServe is firmly committed to the concepts and practice of equal opportunity and non-discrimination. We administer our programs for children and our employment practices without regard to race, gender, religion, age, cultural heritage marital status, sexual orientation, political belief, veteran status, national origin, disability or any other characteristic protected by federal, state, or local law. Our center is inclusive and we will make reasonable accommodations, based on the child's special needs and our abilities to meet those needs. If your child is in special education at a public school, we require a copy of his or her Individual Education Plan (IEP) or similar document for inclusion in the child's file. Having this plan will allow our teachers to provide the best possible care and learning for your child.

our team

Our teachers are specifically chosen for their interest and dedication to provide quality care, nurturing and learning to young children. Each member of our staff has education, training and/or experience in Early Childhood Education and meet the qualifications set by the State of Iowa, Department of Human Services. Staff must pass thorough criminal and child abuse criminal record checks, references check and health examination. Staff complete an orientation and ChildServe training program. We believe that learning is a life-long process, for children as well as adults. Our teachers are offered continual opportunities throughout their employment to further their education and improve their skills. We offer in-service training, company-wide workshops and seminars and tuition reimbursement. We partner with the T.E.A.C.H. Early Childhood Iowa to provide scholarships and sponsorships to staff to earn an Early Childhood Associates or Early Childhood Bachelor Degree. Our full time staff members are eligible to participate in a comprehensive employee benefits program and are compensated above market rate which enables us to attract and retain high quality employees.



SECTION 2: ENROLLMENT

We welcome the opportunity to enroll children who are between the ages of 6 weeks and 6 years of age. We offer inclusive childcare for children with special health care needs that can be met within the classroom environment. Prior to admission, we will assess your child's needs to ensure that we have the ability to provide the level of service required in the best interest of your child.

application

All application/enrollment forms must be on file at least 2 business days prior to the first day of care. A student file will be maintained for each child enrolled. The file includes family information form, detailed care plan, physical exam report, IDPH immunizations, service agreement and food program application. Student records are to be updated annually according to the Iowa Department of Human Services. Any change of address, telephone numbers, emergency contact information and/or medical/health information should be reported to the office immediately. Enrollment information including emergency contact information must be renewed at least every 12 months.

fee and payment policies

Registration Fees: \$50 for 1 child, \$75 for 2 or more children. Registration fees are non-refundable and do not apply towards tuition payments. The registration fee must be paid prior to being placed on the waiting list or enrolled into an available opening. If service is interrupted, a new enrollment fee must be paid prior to re-enrollment.

Reservation Fees: Once the registration fee has been paid the child(ren) will be added to the waiting list and become eligible to reserve enrollment. If a spot becomes available, you will be notified and given the option to reserve the spot. The reservation fee will be a non-refundable payment of one week's tuition. This payment will be applied as a tuition payment when enrollment begins.

Tuition Policies: Tuition must be paid by Tuesday of each week for the current week in accordance with your fee agreement. A late payment fee will apply to past due accounts. Payment must be received each week for service to continue the following week. Your child will not be allowed to attend the center if your account is not current and paid in full.

A late fee will be charged if your child is picked up after closing time. The fee is \$10.00 per child for every 15 minute increment after 6:00 p.m. Repeat occurrences of late pick-up could result in an increased late pick-up fee or discontinued enrollment.

A fee will be charged for checks returned due to insufficient funds. We reserve the right to refuse any subsequent payments by check.

Tuition fees are reviewed annually and are adjusted in the fall. Tuition rates vary according to the age of your child and classroom assignment. Additional fees for special field trips, in-center activities, dance classes, etc. may apply and are not included in the weekly tuition fee.

Refunds: Refunds allowable per policy will be reimbursed within 30 business days following request and/or discharge. Payment will be in the form of a check issued by the ChildServe business office and mailed to the home address on file. Tuition Express errors resulting in over-payment will be reimbursed as soon as possible, within 5 business days.

payment methods

Payment is accepted in the form of scheduled electronic payment, credit card, check, money order, cashier's check or cash. To arrange electronic payment, simply complete the Automatic Payment Authorization form available at the center.

SECTION 3: CENTER POLICIES

hours of operation

The center is open Monday through Friday from 6:30 a.m. to 6:00 p.m.

holiday closings

Our centers are officially closed on the following holidays:

- New Year's Day
- Martin Luther King Day
- Independence Day
- Labor Day
- Thanksgiving Day
- Friday following Thanksgiving Day
- Christmas Eve day
- Christmas Day

If a holiday falls on a Saturday or Sunday, it will be observed on Friday or Monday.

Our centers are closed on Martin Luther King Day to conduct full-day professional development training for center staff.

Operating hours for New Year's Eve may be reduced.

Tuition is not reduced for absent days or center closings. The center will make every effort to remain open during inclement weather.

drop off and pick up

We require that children be brought into the center and personally escorted to the classroom teacher by an adult. We also require that the child be checked in.

Upon arrival at the center, infants are to be removed from their car seat. If asleep, the child should be placed in their crib. The center provides a storage area for car seats outside of the classrooms which we welcome families to utilize as needed.

At the end of the day, we will release your child only to parents or guardians with legal custody or persons over the age of 18 who are designated by you on the Emergency Contact form. Under no circumstances will a child be released to any person who is a registered sex offender. Under no circumstance will a child be released to a person who is not on the contact list or for whom the parent has not written an authorization note, even if the child and a staff member are familiar with the person. This includes parents of other children enrolled in the center as well as staff members. Adults other than parents or guardians will be required to show picture identification. The child must be signed-out by the person to whom the child is released. If you are unable to arrive at the center prior to our closing time of 6:00 p.m., it is your responsibility to contact your emergency pick-up person to make arrangements for timely pick-up of your child.

The safety of your child is our highest priority. For that reason, we require that all children be signed in and out each day, be escorted to and from the classroom by an adult and be supervised at all times in the center, in the parking lot and on ChildServe property. Please make sure that you or your designee has contact with your child's teacher both at drop-off and pick-up times.

Although we may not legally refuse to release a child to an authorized person, we will respond if a parent, guardian or designee presents contentious, intoxicated or impaired status. We will offer to secure alternate transportation or call another authorized person to pick up the child. If family members or visitors become disruptive and their actions jeopardize the safety and security of children, other families or staff, we may ask the individual to leave our premises.

We will notify the police immediately if we are unsuccessful in our efforts to maintain safety and/or if we suspect that a child has left the center with an authorized person who is intoxicated or impaired. If your child will not attend on a given day, or arrive late, please notify the center no later than 9:00 a.m.



open door policy

Parents/guardians are always welcome at ChildServe. We encourage you to visit anytime and join us for field trips or special center events.

In the event that parental contact is prohibited by court order, a copy of the applicable legal document (court/custody order) must be included in the child's file. Otherwise, we are unable to restrict access. We keep this information confidential and solely for the safety of your child. Even with a court order, our ability to deny access is limited to our notifying promptly the proper police authority and the custodial parent and following our organizational process should unsanctioned contact be attempted or occur at the center.

It is ChildServe policy to remain neutral in all custody matters. Our centers may not serve as a visitation site.

restricted access policy

Individuals shall have unrestricted access only to children for whom they are the parent, legal guardian or custodian unless contact is prohibited by court order. All persons, other than those prohibited access or approved for unrestricted access (parents/guardians have unrestricted access to their **own** children), shall have restricted access while on center property and are not allowed to provide direct care or be alone with any child for whom that person is not the authorized parent, guardian or custodian. All registered sex offenders will be denied access to childcare property.

special occasions

It is not necessary for you to provide treats for your child's birthday or other special occasions. If you chose to do so, we require that treats be peanut/tree nut free, purchased commercially and prepackaged. Please discuss and schedule your plans with the Supervisor in advance.

personal items

Our center provides fun, educational toys, equipment and activities. Therefore, we ask you to keep your child's toys or special personal items at home to avoid loss or breakage. For occasional sharing times planned by a teacher, your child may bring in an item as long as it is safe, appropriate and labeled with their name.

privacy/photos

ChildServe strives to protect the privacy, confidentiality, and dignity of the children and families we serve. Our policy is that a signed photo release form must be on file prior to any photos being taken of any child. Parents must also be aware that they will not be able to take photographs of any child (other than their own) without the express written permission of the other child's parents. Exceptions to this policy may be made for field trips, group events, or performances.

nutrition

Our center provides a nutritious breakfast, lunch and afternoon snack that meet the Federal Food Program guidelines. Meals and snacks are served at specific times as follows. If your child is not present during the designated timeframe, please make arrangements for your child to eat prior to arriving. Otherwise, your child will be included in the next scheduled meal or snack.

Breakfast	8:30 a.m. – 9:15 a.m .
Lunch	11:30 a.m. – 12:30 p.m.
Snack	2:30 p.m. – 3:15 p.m.

We do not allow outside food to be brought into the center unless the child is under 1 year old.

If your child has food allergies or requires a special diet, we will work with you and your child's physician to accommodate your child's needs.

Infant Nutrition: Infants will be fed according to your written diet plan. The plan will be updated as the diet changes. Only credible foods are permitted according to the Child and Adult Care Food Program guidelines. Meat/veggie combination dinners, puddings and desserts are examples of non-credible foods.

You are responsible for providing breast milk or the iron-fortified formula of your choice. ALL bottles must be labeled with your child's full name. If breast milk is provided, the bottle or container must be labeled with the child's full name and the date and time the milk was expressed. Frozen breast milk will be thawed in the refrigerator or under running cool tap water. Bottles will be heated in bottle warmers provided by the center or under warm running water to a temperature not exceeding 98.6°. Any formula or breast milk not consumed during a feeding will be discarded after 1 hour. Infants will be held while bottle feeding.

Age-appropriate solid foods prepared on-site are provided or you may choose to provide commercially packaged baby food. Solids will be fed by spoon only, not in a bottle or infant feeder unless prescribed in writing by the child's primary care provider. Good communication between you and your child's caregivers is essential for success, especially when introducing new foods. When your child is ready for table foods, your child's teacher will provide a menu for you to circle food items that are safe for your child to try. Children should not try new foods for the first time while at the center; it is advised that children try a food at home at least three times prior to consuming at the center to ensure tracking of potential allergies.

This center participates in the Child and Adult Care Food Program. This program is a federally funded program of the United States Department of Agriculture. The Iowa Department of Education provides oversight of the program. The purpose of the program is to insure proper nutrition for children according to federal nutrition standards, provide financial support to qualified providers for serving nutritious, credible meals and snacks and encourage lifelong healthy eating habits and physical activity habits. Our participation in this federal program is a direct benefit not only to the children in our care, but to the families whom we serve. The reimbursements we receive from this program supplement our budget which is in turn passed on to families in the form of more affordable tuition rates.

It is the policy of this Child Nutrition Program provider not to discriminate on the basis of race, creed, color, sex, sexual orientation, gender identity, national origin, disability, or religion in its programs, activities, or employment practices as required by the Iowa Code section 216.7 and 216.9. If you have questions or grievances related to compliance with this policy by the CNP Provider, please contact the Iowa Civil Rights Commission, Grimes State Office Building, 400 E. 14th Street, Des Moines, IA 50319-1004; phone number 515-281-4121, 800-457-4116; web site: <http://www.state.ia.us/government/crc/index.html>.

clothing

Sturdy, washable play clothes are recommended for your child's safety and comfort at the center. In order to prevent the risk of choking and strangulation, ChildServe does not permit any children wearing drawstring ties near the neck, necklaces, bracelets, or dangling earrings. Stud earrings are acceptable as long as they do not cause a safety risk to any child. To prevent injury, your child should wear rubber-soled, closed-toe shoes, preferably sneakers, especially on the playground. Jellies, sandals, and crocs are discouraged. Flip-flops are not permitted. The children are expected to wear shoes at all times. When your child wears heavy boots to school during inclement weather in place of shoes, other shoes must be sent for use indoors. We ask that you provide a complete set of season-appropriate extra clothing, including underwear and socks, labeled with your child's name. All outwear should also be labeled. Clothing soiled as a result of "toileting accidents" will be sent home in a plastic bag. According to health and safety guidelines, we are unable to rinse or launder soiled articles of this nature.

diapering

Families will provide diapers and wipes for children. All diapers will be changed at least every 2 hours or more frequently if necessary. Within childcare centers, the Department of Human Services recommends use of disposable diapers for health and sanitation reasons. However, ChildServe will partner with families preferring to use cloth diapers. In this case, ChildServe cannot accept the use of diapers with safety pins or closures that could injure any child.

Soiled cloth diapers cannot be cleaned by ChildServe staff and must be put directly into a lined garment bag, provided by the family. Clean diapers and garment bag must be provided daily to ensure the continued use of cloth diapers.

toilet training

Toilet training is usually initiated around the age of 2 years and ideally accomplished prior to a child's transition to the preschool classroom around the age of 3 years. Toilet training is approached in accordance with requests of the child's parents and in a manner that is consistent with the child's physical and emotional abilities. Once you start at home, we will make every effort to coordinate our program with yours. We ask that you supply us with at least two complete changes of clothing and an ample supply of training pants or underwear for each day your child attends. If your child has just started toilet training, they may still wear a diaper at rest time. Children learning to be self-sufficient in the bathroom will have an easier time if they wear clothing that they can pull off and on by themselves. Your child's teacher will provide written communication daily regarding your child's toileting progress.

traditional holidays

Holiday themes will emphasize multi-cultural traditions. The children in our care represent many different religions and ethnic groups. The folklore and customs of each are an important part of our collective culture and are presented as such. The spirit of joy and happiness is the common theme. We do not emphasize religious themes or one particular tradition. Parents are encouraged to share their traditions and customs with other children and their families. Please offer your suggestions to the Supervisor or your child's teacher.



SECTION 4: HEALTH & SAFETY

Developmental Screening

Developmental screening is available to all children who participate in our childcare program. The screening is completed by ChildServe's licensed speech-language pathologists, occupational therapists and physical therapists. The purpose of this program is to provide families with information about their child's development, and if necessary, provide resources and referrals for developmental intervention.

We will recommend the screening within 90 days of enrollment as needed. Parents/guardians may also request the screening at their discretion. The screenings will be conducted only with parent/guardian permission and results will be provided to them upon completion. Permission forms and additional information is available from a Supervisor.

child supervision

In accordance with Iowa Code, children are provided constant supervision by sight and sound by qualified caregivers who are employed by ChildServe. Children's attendance is strictly monitored continuously throughout the day using a name-to-face tool. Teachers are required to maintain staff:child ratio at all times. If a child is without supervision for any length of time the parent will be notified. We will call if a child is unaccounted for after 2 minutes. Performance of duties outside of the classroom is permitted only when ratio can be maintained. Classroom volunteers who have direct contact/interaction with children other than their own child must pass thorough criminal and child abuse record checks, reference checks and complete volunteer orientation and training provided by ChildServe Volunteer Services Department prior to involvement in our centers. Classroom volunteers are not used to maintain staff:child ratios, are never left alone with children and are scheduled in advance. We do welcome volunteers and corporate groups for community service projects not involving direct interaction with children such as playground clean-up, etc. These individuals and groups are guided by ChildServe staff and do not participate in classroom activities.

illness

Our goal is to keep the spread of contagious diseases and illnesses at a minimum. For the comfort of your ill child and the health and wellness of other children, families and staff, your child may not attend the center if any of the following symptoms are present:

- Fever of 101 degrees or above
- Vomiting
- Diarrhea (2 or more times in one day)
- Rash of unexplained origin
- Other illnesses that warrant exclusion until treatment has been initiated sufficient to reduce the likelihood of transmitting the illness. Sources such as the CDC Safe and Healthy Childcare manual and Iowa Department of Health may be used to provide guidance.

In general, children who are lethargic and unable to participate actively in the full, regular program will not be allowed to remain at the center. If your child becomes ill while at the center, we will call you and expect that your child be picked up within one hour of notification. Children should not return to the center until he/she has been fever-free for 24 hours, is free from vomiting or diarrhea, is on a normal diet and/or has had adequate time of recovery recommended for the specific illness. In some instances, a physician's certificate of good health may be required before a child will be allowed to return.

contagious diseases

If your child is ill with a contagious disease, he or she may not return to the center without a physician's written statement indicating that the child is no longer contagious and is able to participate in activities. It is the parent's responsibility to notify the center if their child is diagnosed with any contagious disease so that other families can be notified according to recommendations of the Iowa Department of Health. We will post a notice on the parent information board in the lobby for any instance of contagious disease affecting children who may have had direct exposure at the center and we will immediately report such disease to the local health authorities as required.

hand washing

We comply with infection control standards and require hand washing upon arrival at the center, before eating, after toileting, after playing outside and at any other appropriate time. We want to control the spread of germs and also strive to help teach your child valuable personal skills.

immunization records

To protect the health of all children, the Iowa Department of Health requires all children to be immunized against diphtheria, tetanus, pertussis, H. influenza type B, polio, measles, rubella and varicella (chicken pox). A current signed and dated Iowa immunization certificate must be on file and updated in accordance with state law.

We maintain the right to deny attendance if immunizations are not current. We require medical waiver signed by the physician for children exempt from immunization requirements. A religious exemption may also be granted upon receipt of notarized documentation.

allergies

Please inform the Supervisor if your child has an allergy. An emergency health care plan will be required prior to initial start day and updated as needed. The plan will be established by our nurse and center staff in collaboration with the parents/legal guardians and child's physician. If your child has food allergies or requires a special diet, we must be provided with a physician's note with recommendations as well as a food program form signed by the physician. We will work with you and your child's physician to accommodate your child's needs. Our center is a peanut-free facility. Since peanut/tree nut allergies are potentially life-threatening, we carefully monitor all foods/ingredients.

medication

Medication will be administered only with written consent of a parent or legal guardian on a medication permission slip. Medications will be given by a caregiver who has completed medication administration training provided by ChildServe. When possible, it is preferred that medication be given at home. BID (twice/day) medications most often preclude distribution at the center.

All medications must be given to your child's teacher for safekeeping in a locked cabinet. Prescription medication must be supplied in the original container, complete with the pharmacy label including child's name, date, name of medication, prescription number, required dosage and schedule for administration. Other than diaper cream and sunscreen, **ALL** over the counter medications require a written physician's order. Physician documentation must include child's name, name of medication, required dosage and time to be given, time frame for treatment and reason for the medication. We cannot dispense over-the-counter medication on an "as needed" basis. Medications must be taken home at the end of the authorization period. Any medication left in the center without a current consent permission slip will be disposed of.

outdoor play

We consider children's outdoor experiences an important part of our curriculum. Our playgrounds include equipment and spaces designed for active play and discovery to provide children with exercise, fresh air and extended learning activities. Daily outdoor activities will occur, weather permitting. Parents are responsible for sending children in adequate clothing and footwear to maintain good health during outdoor play in all suitable weather conditions, including normal winter temperatures. Please do not ask us to keep a child inside because of a cold or other illness, except for recuperation from bronchitis or pneumonia, as ordered by a physician. A child who is too sick to go outside is usually too sick to be in a social situation with other children.

rest and naptime

For the health and well being of every child, a rest time is provided every day. We provide a cot, sheet, and a blanket. Your child may bring a favorite blanket or small sleep toy from home. Please label these items and launder them weekly.

Children are encouraged to sleep during the designated naptime. We recognize that children's nap routines vary and that some children require less sleep than others. We provide each child the opportunity to rest for a minimum of 30 minutes on their cot. After 30 minutes, children who chose not to sleep may participate in a quiet activity on their cot or in an area of the classroom where they will not disturb others.

Infants under one year of age are provided a safe sleep environment according to recommendations by the American Academy of Pediatrics and the National Health and Safety Performance Standards to reduce the risk of sudden infant death syndrome (SIDS). All cribs are in compliance with current Federal Regulations. Cribs are free of bumper pads, blankets, burp cloths, quilts, stuffed animals, toys, etc. Infants sleep in a crib assigned to them and labeled with their name. Infants are always placed in the crib flat on their backs to sleep unless the child's physician, practitioner or clinician has provided a signed sleep position medical waiver. While infants will always be placed on their backs to sleep, if they are able to change position on their own, they may remain in whatever position they prefer to sleep. Devices such as wedges or infant positioners will not be used unless a physician order for such is provided. Parents are responsible to provide infant safe-sleep sacks for their child. Swaddle-type sleep sacks are prohibited as they do not align with best practice for SIDS prevention.

responsibilities to protect children

It is the policy of ChildServe that all staff are mandatory reporters and under Iowa state law, must report observed or suspected abuse or neglect against children or dependent adults to the Child Protective Services Agency.

accidents, injuries, or emergencies

We take every precaution to protect the safety of your child. This includes routine inspections and maintenance of our facilities, playgrounds and equipment, a safety awareness program and monthly fire and tornado drills. We follow SIDS prevention practices in our nursery. All staff receive first aid training and are certified in CPR. Any accident or injury is reported to the supervisor and is documented. You will be informed of any injury, will be asked to sign an incident report and will receive a copy of the report when you pick up your child.

Because children will be children, accidents may happen. When they do occur, and we determine that medical attention is needed, we will call you or your designated emergency contact. If a child experiences a medical emergency, ChildServe staff will take the action that is in the best interest of your child, including calling emergency medical personnel if necessary.

In the event of actual emergency requiring evacuation of the center, children and staff will seek temporary shelter as follows:

Ames Center:

ChildServe Offices
2010 Philadelphia Street
(515) 232-2500

Johnston Center:

ChildServe Center
5406 Merle Hay Road
(515) 727-8750
Training Room near Welcome Center A

field trips

Due to safety concerns and high cost of transportation, field trips are selectively scheduled. Instead, we offer a variety of educational experiences provided by community organizations in our centers. For all off-site field trips at least one additional staff will attend the field trip to help provide additional supervision and direct care. If parents choose to not have their child participate in a scheduled field trip their child will join the closest aged classroom for the duration of the scheduled field trip time. Guardians/parents are required to document permission for their children to attend any off-site field trips. The permission form provides details for the specific field trip location, date of event, transportation mode, staff attending and requests for parent chaperons. The form also indicates the time children will depart from the center and return from the activity.

When a field trip includes only independent walking to a nearby venue, additional staff will accompany the group above the required classroom ratio according to DHS regulations. Occasionally, staff may take children from our immediate property for a walk within the vicinity on the center. According to DHS regulations, "One person may take four children or fewer on an activity away from the center, such as a short walk to a park or library or taking a stroller of two to four infants for a walk outdoors (IAC 109.8(2))."

monitoring outside visitors

ChildServe is responsible for ensuring the safety of children at the center and preventing harm by being proactive and diligent in supervising not only the children, but other people present at the facility.

Visitors must check in at the front desk and will be under the direct supervision and monitoring of a paid staff member at all times and will not be allowed to assume any childcare responsibilities.

ChildServe staff will approach anyone who is on the property of the center without their knowledge to ask what their purpose is. If staff is unsure about the reason they will contact their Site Manager or another management staff to get approval for the person to be on site. If it becomes a dangerous situation staff will follow the "intruder in the center" procedures. Non-agency persons who are on the property for other reasons such as maintenance, repairs, etc. will be monitored by paid staff and will not be allowed to interact with the children on premise.

smoking, tobacco use, and prohibited substances

It is the intent and obligation of ChildServe to provide a tobacco, drug and alcohol-free property for the children, families, staff and general public. Our personnel policies reflect this commitment and include drug and alcohol testing as dictated by policy as well as disciplinary action which may include termination of employment according to test results.

pets

Only aquatic pets (fish) are allowed in our classrooms. We restrict pet visits to our center for the safety of the children and staff. Management approval is required prior to any pet visit. If approved, current vaccination records from a licensed veterinary clinic must be presented prior to bringing pets to any ChildServe location.

biting

Biting is an unfortunate but natural stage in the development of most young children. Although parents may not observe this behavior at home, most children who participate in a social environment with other children, may, on occasion, bite another child or be bitten by another child. While this is unpleasant for everyone involved, biting does not, under normal circumstances, represent a health threat.

The center's policy on biting is to help children outgrow this undesirable behavior by learning more acceptable forms of social interaction. Our approach to managing biting is consistent with our policy for managing behavior problems in general. We examine the environment and the activity schedule to see how they may be contributing to the behavior, and we make any adjustments that we feel may help the child to modify the behavior. We also help parents to understand the behavior so they can be prepared to respond in a constructive way.

Unless biting by a child is unusually chronic, it does not constitute cause for the center to suggest that a child should receive additional intervention outside the center or alternative child care services. We may, on rare occasions, decide to assign children to different groups as a remedial strategy. Under no circumstances, outside of a court order, do we have the right to discuss one child's biting with another child's parents or to acknowledge the identity of a child who exhibits biting behaviors.

SECTION 5: FAMILY PARTNERSHIP

parent involvement

We maintain an open door policy for parents and guardians. We welcome visits and involvement in program activities at any time when your child is present. Parent-teacher conferences are regular features of our program. Conferences are offered twice per year, in the fall and spring, during the months of October/November and April/May for all children enrolled in our program. We prefer face-to-face conferences, however, Zoom or telephone conferences are also available. Conferences focus on evidence of learning and development provided in your child's individual portfolio as well as achievement towards competency goals and objectives according to the Teaching Strategies – Gold Curriculum.

We will also accommodate your request for a special conference with your child's teacher and/or an administrator with reasonable notice. We encourage open communication between families and staff and advise you to make time to visit with your child's teacher at drop off and/or pick up time. We want to speak with you daily about the small but important changes that can affect your child's ongoing development. Our goal is to establish an ongoing dialogue with your family. Please keep in mind that your child's teacher must continue to monitor the rest of the class even though you may feel that you have something very important to discuss. For extended discussion, you will always be able to arrange an appointment with your child's teacher or Supervisor at a mutually convenient time.

All children receive daily reports noting activities, including nourishment, naps and brief/diaper changes. Reports are generated through an electronic app called Tadpoles. Each child has a secure account that you set up on your iPhone or other electronic device. Information about your child's day is released at the end of the day, when your child is checked out of the center. Please check the classroom family information boards to keep up-to-date with daily happenings and special events. Periodic bulletins with special announcements will also be posted or provided to you.

partnering with childserve

The purpose shared by both the parent and ChildServe is the health and well-being of the children entrusted to ChildServe for support. Our dependence on one another requires us to work together to meet your child's needs.

Together we are responsible to:

- Treat each other with dignity and respect.
- Share essential information to understand your child's needs.
- Develop a plan of care that will meet the priority needs of your child.
- Keep each other informed of any changes in your child's health or any circumstances that would affect the services received from us.
- Notify each other in advance of any scheduling changes.
- Talk with one another at least once every three months to review your child's progress.
- Meet with one another at least once a year to develop a new plan of care.
- Resolve concerns in ways that build a positive relationship.

principles of family centered care

The foundation of family-centered care is the partnership between families and professionals. Key to this partnership are the following principles:

- Families and professionals work together in the best interest of the child and family.
- Everyone respects the skills and expertise brought to the relationship.
- Trust is acknowledged as fundamental.
- Communication and information sharing are open and objective.
- Participants make decisions together.
- There is a willingness to negotiate.

Based on this partnership, family centered care:

- Acknowledges the family as the constant in a child's life.
- Builds on family strengths.
- Supports the child in learning about and participating in his/her care and decision making.
- Honors cultural diversity and family traditions.
- Recognizes the importance of community-based services.
- Promotes an individual and developmental approach.
- Encourages family-to-family and peer support.
- Supports youth as they transition between milestones.
- Develops policies, practices, and systems that are family-friendly and family-centered in all settings.
- Celebrates successes.

providing feedback

ChildServe is committed to the highest ethical and quality standards. We rely on our staff, volunteers, board members, families and strategic partners to help us identify sources of concern or confusion. ChildServe professionals are available during arrival and departure times to listen to your feedback in person. Those individuals will share your feedback with the appropriate management team by using a family feedback form.

You are also encouraged you to contact the on-site Supervisor, the Manager, or any administrator at any time. Contact information is listed on the family information board at the center or may be obtained by a supervisor or staff member.

Because we value your feedback, a member of our management team may call you to simply touch base and to give you an opportunity to share feedback. We also conduct an annual family satisfaction survey which provides a more formal venue for families to share positive experiences as well as an opportunity to make helpful suggestions.

It is the policy of ChildServe to prohibit discrimination based on the following legally recognized protected class areas: sex, pregnancy, race, color, religion, creed, national origin, age, sexual orientation, gender identity, citizenship, genetic information, veteran status, disability, or other characteristic protected by law. It is also the policy of ChildServe to prohibit harassment in the workplace by any person and in any form. This policy extends to each and every level of our operations. If you have witnessed or are the victim of harassment, report it immediately to your Supervisor on duty. Additionally, you may report via the AlertLine phone number (877-874-8416) or website <http://childserve.alertline.com>

confidentiality

ChildServe believes in protecting the confidentiality of all families who choose to use our services. Information contained in a child's record is privileged and confidential.

professional boundaries

ChildServe recognizes that families often like to express their appreciation for the care and support provided to their child by giving gifts. Words of appreciation expressed verbally or in a thank you card are the best ways to express your appreciation. Families wanting to give a gift should direct that gift to all caregivers in our center or make a donation to the center/class room. Individual staff are not allowed to accept gifts from families.

guiding behavior

ChildServe programs incorporate goals for positive guidance to help children learn appropriate behavior and to develop a positive self-concept.

Teachers use the following strategies to encourage self-control:

- Redirection – offering an appropriate, alternative activity or choice.
- Positive statements – explaining appropriate behavior and referring to the behavior, not the child.
- Giving attention to the children who are hurt before talking to the child who hurt someone.
- Focus on positive behavior and acknowledge children's good choices.
- Using the "cool-down" strategy by giving the child time to calm down and improve his/her behavior.
- Partnering with families to establish an action plan for guiding behavior at home and at school.

Should there be concerns about a specific developmental issue or behaviors, we may partner with you to develop a plan to help identify both the child's needs and sources of help available to address those needs, including outside referral organizations.

Because we provide care and education in a group setting, we must be concerned for the welfare and safety of all children and staff. If a child exhibits behaviors or needs that jeopardize the welfare and safety of other children or our staff, we reserve the right to discharge your child immediately, without notice.

challenging behavior and redirection

Center-wide Positive Behavior Intervention Support (PBIS) is implemented from birth up to age six; all of the ages served at the childcare centers. The foundation of PBIS is to build positive relationships between staff and children. Our goal is to get to know each child individually and to provide guidance for solutions and choices with peers, self, and elements within the environment. With PBIS strategies, children's behavior and staff's actions will encourage appropriate behavior. We will partner with families to implement similar strategies in the home. It is extremely important to provide consistent response and support in all domains when children demonstrate challenging behavior.

The following process applies when a child's behavior is consistently disruptive and unmanageable:

1. Child's adverse behavior and staff's actions/PBIS strategies to encourage appropriate behavior will be documented on a behavior log. Staff will inform the parent of the behavior and steps they took in response the same day incident(s) occurred.
2. The log will be reviewed. Classroom will be observed, strategies evaluated, and recommendations/guidance will be provided to staff.
3. If at any time child exhibits severe behavior that cannot be managed within the classroom setting, the supervisor or designee will intervene and remove the child from the classroom if necessary. The child will be supported to de-escalate at which time the child will be allowed to return to the group. If child cannot re-gain positive behavior control, a parent/guardian will be called to pick up the child from the center for the remainder of the day. For repeated offenses, the child may be suspended from the center for a period of one to three days. Tuition will not be reduced for days child is sent home for suspension. Severe behaviors include:
 - Danger to self or others (such as head banging, hitting, spitting, hair pulling, throwing objects, kicking, and/or excessive biting that breaks the skin.
 - Disruptive behavior that creates chronic interference to classroom activities (such as tantrums, screaming, foul language, destruction of property, severe or chronic non-compliance or defiance, or elopement.
 - Hitting/kicking/biting a staff or peer.
4. If behavior is consistently disruptive, the parent will be notified, a meeting with the parent will be arranged within one week, and a behavior support plan determined by the supervisor, staff, and parent will be implemented.
5. A follow-up conference will be conducted within 2 weeks and subsequently as needed to discuss progress, identify additional interventions and supports, update plans, establish referral to early childhood consultant or other professional, and/or determine status of enrollment going forward.
6. If parent does not choose or cannot provide support for the center, or even with the parent's support, the plan is not successful, the child will be discharged with two weeks' notice unless the behavior warrants immediate emergency discharge.

SECTION 6: DISCHARGE POLICY

discontinuing services

In the event that you wish to discontinue service for your child, a written two week notice is required.

Offenses following a suspension may be grounds for discharge of childcare services.

The child will be discharged with two weeks' written notice unless the behavior warrants immediate emergency discharge.

The Manager has the discretion to make this decision.

We reserve the right to discontinue services based on the following criteria:

- The services the child needs cannot be provided by ChildServe.
- The child exceeds the age of six years and/or enters Kindergarten.
- The child is absent for a length of time that exceeds our ability to maintain active status.
- Funding is not authorized, approved and/or available to support service being provided.
- The child's behavior support needs pose a significant danger to other children and or staff and cannot be safely managed by staff.
- The family is no longer able or willing to partner with ChildServe.
- Failure to pay after reasonable and appropriate notice.
- Failure to meet ChildServe policies.

emergency discharge

Emergency discharge will be initiated to protect the health, safety or well-being of the child, other children or staff if immediate voluntary discharge is not possible or likely.

In the event of an emergency discharge, we will provide a written notice prior to or within 48 hours following the discharge.

appeal process

Parents or Legal Guardians may appeal a discharge decision using the Family Feedback process. Appeals must be received within 7 days following the notice of discharge. Appeals will be reviewed by the Manager and/or Director within 14 days of receipt of the appeal. Guidance may also be sought with the Department of Human Services, Childcare Licensing.



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Believing in the spirit of a child.