

The Giving Tree



Parent Handbook 2025

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Note from the Owner

The Giving Tree, Inc. was formed after years of thought and planning on what quality childcare should be like. As the program and curriculum developed, The Giving Tree, Inc. evolved into an early learning center. Although the childcare industry has boomed, and there exists a large quantity of childcare facilities and caregivers, unfortunately the quality of care and programs has not improved.

The Giving Tree, Inc. is a place where it is understood that children are active learners from an early age, and taking advantage of this is crucial in developing children's lifelong learning traits. We want all children to feel important as individuals and in small groups this is possible.

Most importantly, The Giving Tree is a place where not only do parents feel safe and secure about where their children are spending their day, but a place where children enjoy and are cared for, respected, and have numerous learning opportunities geared for their developmental needs.

Children will most certainly grow in size, but at The Giving Tree, fostering the growth of their intellect and motor skills on a daily basis in a progressive manner is our daily objective.

I look forward to watching our children learn and grow together.

Sincerely,

Katherine J Cozzani

Philosophy

Quality early childhood education lays a solid foundation for children. The program must incorporate a challenging environment in the areas of physical development, social development, emotional development, cognitive development, and language development. Our attention must be focused on the totality of these developmental domains. It takes a highly developed curriculum and a learned instructor to continually assess the needs of the individual children and to create the optimal learning environment for a group of children.

Children will develop at different rates and levels across the developmental domains. The rate of growth is determined by the quality of the child's interaction with the environment and genetic predisposition. Our job as educators is to enhance the interaction with the environment. This is accomplished through planned arrangement of the classroom. Environmental enhancement can assist the teacher in promoting the greatest achievement possible.

Enjoying a passion for learning is a quality that must be inherent to the early childhood teachers, for their professional growth and the growth of their students. The instructor must have a deep understanding of how children grow and when they learn best.

Understanding that children learn both through spontaneous and created play experiences is crucial. Teachers need to know when to allow children to be problem solvers, when to step in and offer suggestions for successful mediation and when to watch the children explore and learn independently.

Children also learn when they are invited to become active participants in a community of learners. Children watch and learn from their peers. Maximizing opportunities for children to work cooperatively as well as individually allows for alternative learning styles. Children will develop problem solving skills and yet also be offered individual time for the promotion of self-help and coping strategies.

At The Giving Tree, the curriculum is devised with each child's developmental needs in mind. Lessons are based on the combination of skills which have been previously learned, new skills that are introduced and then intertwined towards the goal of mastery.

Goals

Our goals for children combine traditional values of respect, honesty and trust with the educational characteristics of independent learners who actively pursue knowledge. Children are encouraged to use their critical thinking skills. These learners successfully work independently as well as with other children to actively pursue knowledge and understanding of the world around them. We want children to be curious and to use their skills and the resources around them to satisfy their curiosity and thirst for knowledge.

Curriculum

The core belief within the philosophy of The Giving Tree is that children have different developmental needs and learning styles that first must be learned by their teachers and then catered to in a stimulating environment at their own rate. The educational curriculum is based on the theory of developmental interactionism and is accomplished through activities that are developmentally appropriate.

Lessons are designed around the children's goals, which means they are being taught to individually. Lessons will be formatted with each child's goals in mind. Monthly units are created by teachers that incorporate student's goals and new concepts that excite children about learning. Basic skill instruction will be incorporated into the thematic units. Phonics and whole language instruction will be used to associate letters, sounds and words together in the formation of reading skills.

Communication

Parents are recognized as the primary caregiver. The parents and teachers are expected to work in a partnership with the regards to the best interests of the child. The teacher's responsibility is to utilize the open lines of communication through daily notes, developmental checklists and parent conferences. Goals will be individualized for each child. Parents and teachers will work in a partnership for the achievement of the child's goals.

Special Features

Computers

Technology must be offered to children as young as 18 months of age. Computers with exceptional Software reinforces the daily activities. The repetition of skills reinforce learning.

Second Language

Introduce a second language during the time of optimal language acquisition and the child will find success. Bilingualism is a definite advantage in society and in today's global market economy.

Technology

View the activities and experiences via the home web page. We will update Monthly with new and quarterly for all other events.

Infant Journals

Each infant keeps a journal for the first year. In this, we communicate with parents about the daily Activities of the individual infants Eating, sleeping, diapering are all recorded, as well as an anecdotal notes each day.

General School Closings and Holidays

Labor Day
Thanksgiving
December holiday break
Presidents' Day
Martin Luther King
Veterans Day
Easter/ Good Friday
Memorial Day
Juneteenth
July 4th
Summer vacation week

Yearly calendar dates are posted in the center. All school closings are paid days. There is no reduction in tuition for holidays, vacation days or closed days due to mother nature.

Hours of Operation: 7:00am-6:00pm

We understand that parents are professionals, please try to understand that we too are professionals that work with children during set times. Maintaining a level of confidence in each other regarding adhering to hours of operation will alleviate future stress

Admission Procedures

Non-Discrimination policy

Admission is open to every child regardless of race, religion, or ethnic background. The Giving Tree is a tuition funded program. Therefore, tuition must be paid in full in order for any child to attend.

Interview and Tour

Upon phone interview, an onsite interview will be conducted at our facility. We ask that all parties come together to view the facility and most importantly the child. It is important to see how they experience the surroundings. We maintain a closed-door policy to strangers. Only families of registered clients are allowed in the facility during operating hours when children are present. This is for the physical and emotional safety of our children. Children do not like to be disrupted from their daily routines, and we feel that allowing the public in at will, would jeopardize their safety and learning.

Tours are typically given every other Wednesday evening by appointment at 5:30pm. Special exceptions will be made in extreme circumstances, but we reserve the right to limit disruptions of our students and staff due to multiple tours.

Application Process

A fee equal to two week's tuition will be used to secure your child's position and will be paid at the time of enrollment. **This deposit is used as your last two weeks of care and is nonrefundable.**

Paperwork Required

The following is a list of paperwork that must be submitted before any child is assigned a classroom:

1. Giving Tree Contract
2. Giving Tree Enrollment Form
3. DCFS Application
4. Immunization Record Doctor may email:
owner@givingtreeschools.com or fax: (708) 209-1551
5. Authorization Sheet for Medical, Field Trips, Medications
6. Handbook signature pages
7. Discipline Policy
8. Nonprescription medication form
9. Summary of DCFS Licensing Standards (Last Page)
- 10 Copy of Birth Certificate
- 11 Copy of Medical Insurance Card
- 12 Vision and Hearing screening for children 3years and older

Phasing In

The new student will then spend two mornings (typically 1/2 day 8:30-12:30) independently with the class.

*The tuition schedule starts with the two half days being considered a full day of care and will be billed at a prorated amount. The tuition for the first two weeks will be invoiced separately from the future tuition payments. After the first tuition statement, tuition is to be paid either biweekly or monthly. * Clients will not be invoiced after the first tuition statement until the child transitions to the next classroom and a new tuition amount will be billed.

*Due Friday before the next cycle of care to avoid late fees.

Client Initial_____

Trial Period

Every client will be given a two-week (calendar) trial period. This is important to ensure that the child has adjusted to his or her new setting. At the end of such period, the clients will be offered a permanent position at the center. Adjustment times vary for children and in some cases the trial period will be extended in writing at the discretion of the Director and the classroom teacher. At the end, or at any time during the trial period, if the Director believes that the situation is not beneficial for the child, or for the other children in the classroom, the child will not be offered a permanent position in the center and may be asked to find alternate childcare arrangements.

Parental Termination of Care

The Giving Tree acknowledges that parents know what is best for their child. If a parent feels that The Giving Tree is not the best environment for their child, they must give two weeks written notice of termination of care. When giving notice keep in mind that two weeks deposit will be used as the last two week of care and no credit or refunds are given for tuitions already paid.

_____ Client Initial

Dismissal from the program Policy

The Giving Tree reserves the right to terminate a care arrangement for the following reasons (not limited to):

- Failure to pay tuition
- Lack of parental cooperation
- Physical or verbal abuse of any person or property
- Lack of compliance with the parent handbook
- Serious illness of the child
- False information given by parent either verbally or in writing

-Any child who, after attempts have been made to meet their individual needs demonstrate the inability to benefit from the type of program offered by the facility, or by whose presence is detrimental to the group shall be discharged from the facility.

-If there is a concern for the immediate safety of the child and other children in the center because of severe behavior problems.

The child may be given an immediate notice of dismissal from the program with alternate care referrals. Less severe problems such as financial matters and failure to adjust will be given in writing anywhere from a one to two week notice at the discretion of the Director and teachers.

In all instances, when a facility determines that it is in the best interests of the child to terminate enrollment, the child's and the parent's needs shall be considered by planning with the parent to meet the child's needs when he/she leaves the facility including referrals to other agencies or facilities.

Client Initials _____

Tuition and Financial Matters

Tuition Rates

Infant Classroom
\$420.00 per week

Toddler I Classroom
\$400.00 per week

Preschool Classroom
\$377.50 per week

Pre-K Classroom
\$362.50 per week

- Part time available upon request
- Part time infant care not available

Additional Fees:

Annual Activity Fee: \$200.00

One-time enrollment fee: \$75.00

*The program is developmentally based and because of this we want the child to be in the most developmentally appropriately challenging classroom, not bound by their chronological age. Children change classrooms when the teachers and parents feel that the child is ready to transition. Parents will be given the date of transition and the new tuition amount via an invoice. Teachers will only transition a child when they show signs of readiness across the developmental domains.

NSF Fees

Any tuition check returned for any reason including but not limited to NSF will be assessed a \$40.00 fee as well as any late fees that have accrued while the payment was not received. After the third day of care, the position will be placed on hold and the child will not be able to attend until the tuition and all late fees have been paid in cash.

Tuition Due Dates

Tuition is to be paid bi-weekly or monthly dependent on individual contracts. The payment is due the Friday before the new two-week cycle of care whether your child is in attendance or not.

Payments not received on Friday morning before 9:00am will be assessed a \$10.00 late fee. If you are not present that day due to illness, vacation or other, the tuition is still due, and any late fees will apply. If Friday is a vacation day, the tuition would be due on the Thursday or Wednesday before the vacation day.

Payments received after the start of care, i.e. Monday will be assessed a \$25.00 late fee for each day payment is not received. After the third day of care, the position will be placed on hold and the child will not be able to attend school until the tuition and any accrued late fees have been paid in full. Late fees not paid within 30 days of occurrence will be subject to a finance charge. This handbook will be reviewed yearly.

Overtime

Overtime fees will begin at 6:00pm in the amount of \$2.00 per minute. This fee will be billed on your next tuition due date via a statement. After three (3) days of nonpayment of late fees, access via the security system will be temporarily deactivated. The computer connected to the security system is the time clock we use. It does not count if you have arrived in the parking lot by 6:00, it is entry into the building and accepting your children.

Other:

-There is no reduction in tuition for sick days, absentee days, or closed school holidays.

-Please call by 8:45 if your child will not be in attendance that Day

- If a child has not been picked up within thirty minutes after the centers closing time and parents have not made any attempt to contact the center.

1. One phone call will be made to the parent messages left and documented.

2. One phone call will be made to the alternative pickup's messages left and documented.

3. If no one responds by one hour the police will be contacted to assist with locating the parent

4. The DFCS hotline will also be contacted

-The Giving Tree is not obligated to hold a position of care for more than five (5) absentee days. Referrals to other agencies and schools will be provided to clients upon written request.

Parent Initial _____

Arrivals and Goodbye Routines

Arrival

Arrival is from 7:00 am to 9:00 am. Your child will be considered absent after 9:00am. Each morning, please check your email center news. The children should hang up their coats in their locker and wash their hands. The children will be greeted by a teacher outside at their parents' car. Teachers will sign in the child
Safety first, safety for all.

All activities during this time should be part of a **goodbye routine** that culminates in the parents going off to work and the child going to play and learn with their classmates.

All children should be in attendance at the center by 9:00AM, this is the start of our day and in order to receive maximum benefit of the program. We feel strongly that having additional children enter the program while learning is taking place interferes with the smooth and productive operation of the activities. We will schedule a conference with parents when we feel that late arrivals have become the norm and are disrupting the class.

Goodbye Routine

Each family should establish a goodbye routine that works for their family. The routine should be consistent each and every day, no matter who drops the child off in the morning. Things like "Mommy or Daddy loves you and we will see you later when we pick you up" This supports each child and establishes a feeling of confidence even though they may be feeling sad about the initial departure. Please feel free to stand in the hallway out of sight or call after leaving the center to see how your child is.

Departure

Each parent or designee needs to gather the child's belongings and any notes from school. The pickup person must sign the child out via the security system.

On file will be a designated pick-up person and any alternates. Unless a person is designated by the enrolling parents in writing, the child will not be released, even if you call to a stranger, a stranger to us. Identifications will be checked and copied for our files when alternates are picking up your children. Please make sure the designee understands the pickup procedure.

Center Main Door: Safety First Safety for All

For the safety of the children enrolled at The Giving Tree, the main door of the center will be always The facility is not open to parents when their child is not in session. Clients once dis-enrolled may not visit without prior appointment with the Director.

Teacher assignment

The Giving Tree is dedicated to providing the highest level of professionals in every classroom. At any time with or without notice the administration may make changes to the staff. We will always keep the best interests of all the children in the classroom in mind as we make changes.

Health and Safety

All children must have on file a current (within the last 6 months) immunization record. Lead and TB tests are mandatory for all children over the age of 2.

Shoe safety: Infant and Toddler I room

For the health and safety of our creepers and crawlers, there are no shoes allowed in these rooms. Please feel free to put on slippers and if there is inclement weather please leave your shoes in the hallway.

Medication

1. The lead teacher administers the medication each time and signs on the administration log, writes the time, dose, and a staff initial.
2. When Non-prescription medicine such as ointments and creams are necessary, parents must fill out a medical authorization form and the medicine must be in the original container. All written permissions are valid for six (6) months unless a shorter time is designated by the Doctor, Dentist, or other healthcare provider.
3. When prescription medication of any kind is necessary, the parents must sign a written permission for the staff to administer the medication.
4. Prescription medication must have the pharmacy label indicating the date, the physician's name the child's name, instructions, and the strength of the medication.
5. Non-prescription medicine must also be labeled with the child's name and the instructions for administering the medicine. Staff can administer over the counter medication, only if it accompanied by a written statement from the child's Doctor: Tylenol or Motrin specifically for febrile seizures.

Note To Parents:

Many times, school is blamed for the illness of a child, meaning that we have allowed germs to spread and fester. This means that a child was brought to the center with said germs by their parents. Each child is visually screened by the teachers each morning for wellness. We are a well child facility and may have to ask you to bring your sick child back home if they have a fever or are sick even in the morning at drop off.

Sometimes children become sick during the course of the day, we will call parents to have the sick child picked up and we will sanitize the classroom to prevent germs from spreading to others.

If you are not sure whether to bring in your child, please call ahead and ask. There is nothing worse than getting a phone call a half an hour after drop off when you are just about at work. We may also require a Doctors statement that the child is not contagious and may return to school. We appreciate everyone's cooperation in this matter, and I am sure that each family does as well.

Sick Policy

A child is healthy and able to attend the school if they are able to participate in all the activities and programs of the day, this includes outside activities. When the children do become ill, it may be necessary to exclude them temporarily from attendance at school.

DCFS guidelines which require exclusion:

- Temperature over 100.1 (axillary) – the child may not return to the center until the temperature have been normal without medication for 48 hours.
- Intestinal disturbance accompanied by diarrhea or vomiting
- Sore or discharging eyes, ears, profuse discolored nasal discharge
- Dry, hacking cough or productive cough
- Undiagnosed rash
- A cold accompanied by the above symptoms (a child will

need to be kept out of the center even while on medication if these symptoms exist)

- Exposure to COVID- the child may not return to center until they have a negative test and a 10-day quarantine. 14 days and a negative test if symptoms occur.

A child's need for comfort and support – there may be instances when a child may not be medically ill, but may be so uncomfortable or distressed that the staff is unable to adequately meet the child's need for attention and emotional support.

These guidelines will be strictly enforced in order to maintain a healthy environment for all. We are simply unable to give a sick child the same attention that their parents would at home. It is also not fair to the other children in the classroom.

The administration recognizes the needs of the parents to work and will try to apply these standards as fairly and consistently as possible to insure the healthiest environment for all. With parents' cooperation in this matter, more restrictive, specific illness policies can be avoided.

While the school may seek medical advice for individual situations, the Staff will make the final determination regarding exclusion of a child because of illness.

Unexpected Illness

If your child should become ill while at school, you will have one (1) hour from a telephone call or message to pick up your child. They deserve to be comforted by the person or people who matter most to them. We will do everything to comfort them in the time it takes you to get to the center, or in making arrangements in having them picked up by an alternate designee. The sick child will be separated from other children until they are picked up. The school staff will begin to contact emergency contacts should the sick child remain at the center longer than an hour or when parents are not responsive to the initial phone call.

Medical Emergencies

Serious

In the case of a serious accident or sudden illness requiring medical attention, the following procedures will be followed:

1. Phone call to 911
2. Child's parents or in the event parents were not reached the emergency contact will be notified
3. Child and health records will be taken via ambulance with a Giving Tree staff member to hospital

*In all cases, an emergency report will be filled out within 24 hours and a copy will be given to parents and kept on file in the main office.

*It is extremely important, especially in the cases of illness or emergency that the emergency contact information is correct. Please report any changes immediately to keep your emergency contact information correct and up to date.

Minor

For minor injuries such as bumps or bruises, the teacher will provide the appropriate first aid and a copy of the accident report will be filled out. Upon pick up the parents will be given a copy to sign. A signed copy of this form will be kept on file in the main office.

It is understood that in case of emergency treatment that the parent's health insurance will cover the costs of emergency transportation, treatment, and care. A copy of insurance will be kept on file in each child's file and will be used for emergency situations.

Emergency drills

The center will have monthly fire drills and bi-annual tornado drills. Emergency maps are located in each classroom and the children will talk about the importance of preparing for an emergency before the actual drill.

Community of Learners

Parental Involvement

Parents are encouraged to share their knowledge of topics of study and to assist in the center for the benefit of all children.

Opportunities arise when parents are encouraged to help such as:

- Chaperoning field trips
 - Lending objects for units of study
 - Helping children at home with concepts we are studying
 - Providing treats for parties or celebrations
 - Assisting in the classroom
 - Guest story book readers
- (None of these opportunities are mandatory, but are greatly appreciated by all involved.)

Birthday Parties

Birthday celebrations are a great way to make each child feel extra special one day of the year. We are incredibly supportive in making the big day an important one. Parents are encouraged to bring in a special, store bought treat for the child to share with their friends. The treat must be peanut free. Parents are also more than welcome to stay and join the celebration with their child. Please set up the 'party' date in advance with the classroom teacher to receive correct enrollment numbers for the class so there will be enough goodies for all.

Other items such as blowers and hats are always fun, but not necessary party equipment. The kids enjoy singing "Happy Birthday" no matter what the extra amenities are.

Meals

Toddlers and Preschoolers

A menu is posted for each week in the classroom for the convenience of the parents. Children will be served a balanced meal consisting of a protein, a grain a combination of fruits and vegetables.

They may have one fruit and one vegetable, two fruits or two vegetables at a given meal. For snacks, a combination of two items from the choices of grain/fruit/milk/water will be chosen. Portions adhere to the DCFS licensing standards and the Child and Adult food program daily nutritional guidelines.

Children will be served a full serving. When they have finished their entire meal they may ask for more. Children are encouraged to try all items. They will not be served more when they have only eaten one food item.

The children will eat family style with their friends. They will remain seated with their friends until the meal is finished. In appropriate aged classrooms, at the end of the meal, the children will ask to be excused and to clean up their meal items.

Milk

Children under the age of two (2) are given whole milk unless directed in writing from a physician. Children aged two and up are given 2% milk

Infants will be served breast milk or formula that is supplied by the parents. A labeled and dated supply must be maintained at the center for the health and benefit of the child. If breast milk is used, a formula back up is required. Parents will be called to deliver additional nutrients if they are notified in writing and fail to re-supply the child's items. Bottles will be used with children until they are one year of age at which point a sippy cup will be used. A sippy cup may be introduced prior to one year of age, but a bottle will still be given unless otherwise directed by a parent.

Infants

Infants will be fed on demand. They will be fed with the directions and recommendations of the parents in mind, but when a child is hungry they will be fed. Bottles are prepared in an “as needed” fashion from the parent’s supply of breast milk or formula.

Substitutions

The Giving Tree will substitute foods only in the cases of a food allergy with a Doctor’s statement and for religious reasons. The foods excluded must be spelled out completely. The Giving Tree staff will do their best to adhere to the religious food exclusions to the best of their ability, while still ensuring the child’s nutritional needs are being met. In some dietary exclusion cases, The Giving Tree may require the parents to supply substitutions.

General Supplies

Each child is provided a drawer/cubby for their personal belongings. Please include each of the following upon registration with your child’s name in the item. The staff will update parents of items that need to be replenished or changed seasonally.

1. Diapers
2. Diapering cream
3. Swaddle wrap/cot mat
4. 2 Full changes of clothes including socks and underwear
5. Sippy cup (Infant and Toddler I)
6. Water bottle

Children under One

1. Diapers
2. Diapering cream
3. Swaddle wrap
4. Crib decorations – Pictures
5. Three (3) bottles with appropriately sized nipples
6. Pacifiers
7. Bibs
8. Sippy cup
9. 3 Changes of clothes with socks

Please note that after supplies have been requested of parents (diapers specifically) and the items run out, parents will be charged \$2.00 per diaper for replacement costs.

Parents are asked to refill the supply as needed.

Toilet Learning

With the cooperation of the parents and teachers, toilet learning can be successful. It is dependent on the will and development of the individual child. We will both look for signs of readiness and interest in the child around two years of age. When the teachers and parents agree that they should try, the parents should bring in two extra changes of clothes for the child, including socks. The child should wear toilet friendly clothes that can be taken off “in a hurry” Overalls, tights, zippers and belts are not encouraged. After three concurrent accidents we will revert back to diapers and try again in a week.

Items from Home

Each child may keep a lovey item from home for nap time at school. When different additional items are brought from home that are considered attractive new toys to the other children. For this reason, we ask that you do not bring in additional items from home. This also includes food items. There are always several children with food allergies that could be severely harmed due to outside foods. We will ask that you take any toy with you after you have said your goodbyes, or we will hold the toy for the child in their cubby until departure time.

A cot mats must be provided for rest time.

Non center foods should not cross the threshold with the child.

Discipline Policy

The term discipline refers to some sort of consequence for unwanted behavior or action. At The Giving Tree, we believe that there are definite reasons behind the child's acting out. Staff, using their knowledge and experience will recognize the reasons behind the actions and redirect the children's actions and energy. The school rules will be the same rules that are taught at home such as: **honesty, respect for other people and respect for belongings.**

Teachers will in most cases try to prevent problems, redirecting as necessary. We will discuss with the child the inappropriate behavior and encourage the child to make amends when offenses involve other children or people. Sometimes there are consequences to our actions. The example would be the misuse of a toy that would cause the toy to have a time out and the child to be asked why? In most cases the child already knows that was inappropriate, but we must remember that we are all teachers. Young children, especially those that cannot communicate verbally have a hard time expressing their feelings and desires. They will occasionally hit, throw toys and even bite. This is natural and yet we will take steps to avoid further conflict by redirecting the energies of the child.

Parents will be asked to play an integral part in maintaining a safe and positive learning environment for all children and staff involved through reinforcement of The Giving Tree's rules. In the instance that a child continuously breaks the rules, a parent meeting will be scheduled. At this meeting parents, teachers and the director will make a plan that will help the child follow the rules of the center.

As per the dismissal policy, if a child fails to meet the rules of the program after an intervention meeting, the parents will be supplied a list of agencies that will assist them in finding alternative care.

Children will be disciplined in a positive way through redirection of actions. A child may be removed from the group to gain self-control, not to exceed one minute per age of the child. Children will never be disciplined for toilet accidents. Staff will encourage preschool children to have the opportunity to resolve their own conflicts.

During the two-week trial period, parents or the Director may terminate the arrangement at any time. After the two-week trial period has ended, both parents and the center staff shall give a written two weeks' notice to end care.

The following behaviors are prohibited in all childcare settings:

1. Corporal punishment, including hitting, spanking, swatting, shaking, pinching and other measures intended to produce physical pain or fear.
2. Threatened or actual withdrawal of food, rest, or use of the bathroom.
3. Abusive or profane language.
4. Any form of public or private humiliation including threats of physical punishment.
5. Any form of emotional abuse, including shaming, rejecting, terrorizing or isolating the child.

Should the center dismiss the child for any reason, the Director or her designee shall hold a parent meeting. The center will then provide a list of agencies for the parents to find alternative care.

Parent Initial_____

Child Abuse

The staff of The Giving Tree is required by law to report to the Department of Children and Family Services any suspected physical, emotional, or sexual abuse or neglect.

Parent Handbook

This handbook and the accompanying contract are subject to a yearly review and possible revision. We reserve the right to make changes in rates and policies as we deem necessary based upon program administration or economic climate. You will be notified in writing of any changes that occur. Every attempt will be made to give at least two weeks' notice of changes.

Infant Schedule

7:00-8:30 Arrival and Handwash
7:30-8:00 Handwash, breakfast, individual play
8:30-9:00 Play time (teacher and child learning)
(Outside weather permitting)
9:00-9:30 Handwash, AM bottles
9:30-11:30 AM nap time
11:30-12:00 Individual Play time
12:00-12:30 Handwash and Lunch/bottles
12:30-1:30 Puzzles, songs and fingerplays
1:30-2:30 Dance, Music (Outside weather permitting)
2:30-3:30 Handwashing and PM Snack
3:30-4:30 Nap time
4:30-5:30 Group songs and large motor activities
5:30-6:00 Individual play, stories and clean up

Diapers will be changed when needed

Diapers will be checked during each handwashing break

Infants who are on their own schedule will be catered to on an individual basis. Therefore individual infant schedules will vary.

Infant/Toddler Program Description

Program

- The daily program for infants and toddlers shall provide experiences which promote the individual child's growth and well-being in the development of gross and fine motor skills, sensory learning, language, cognition, and positive self-concept.
- Self-care such as washing, dressing, toileting, brushing, and combing shall be encouraged as each child shows the evidence of the ability to do so.

Equipment:

Indoor and outdoor play equipment and materials provided shall be suitable for the infants and toddlers to stimulate growth, learning, health and overall development.

- Equipment and play materials shall be durable and free from characteristics that may be hazardous or injurious to infants and toddlers. Hazardous or injurious characteristics include sharp, rough edges, toxic paint, objects small enough to be swallowed.
- Toys and equipment shall be cleaned and disinfected daily.

Environment:

- Separate space for infants and toddlers shall be available away from the older children.
- The sleeping and play arrangements are as follows: 25 square feet of play space per child and a minimum of 30 square feet of sleeping space per child with at least two feet between each crib and the next.
- There is a sink in the room specifically for staff and children handwashing.
- A toilet is easily accessible
- No extension cords shall be used in the areas where children are permitted. All electrical cords not in use with the supervision of an adult shall be unplugged and the outlets covered.

- The means for warming bottles and food shall be accessible only to adults. Microwave ovens shall not be used for the purpose of warming bottles.
- A refrigerator shall be available and easily accessible to the children's room.

Staff Resources:

A nurse shall visit the center each month to instruct staff in the proper health care of infants and toddlers. The person shall visit the facility to observe the childcare techniques of the staff and provide in-service training. Nurse also reviews medical records to ensure that immunizations are updated.

Visits will be bi-weekly during the permit period and monthly thereafter.

Infant and Toddler Health and Safety

Food:

Food for infants and toddlers shall be handled and served according to the provisions of the Department of Children and Family Services Nutrition and Meal Service section of the Standards for childcare centers.

- Daily food requirements for children under one year of age shall be offered, unless otherwise indicated in writing by a physician, in consultation with the parent (s)
- Food for infants not consuming table food may be provided by the parent as per the childcare center's written policy.
- Flexible feeding schedule of infants shall be established to coordinate with the parents' schedules at home to allow for nursing infants.
- Infants not consuming table food shall be fed in consultation with parents. Feeding times and amounts consumed shall be documented in writing and available for review by parents.
- Formula provided by the parents shall be diluted according to the manufacturer's instructions using water from a source approved by the local health department.

- Formula shall be milk based unless otherwise indicated in writing by the child's physician.
- If the formula is provided by the parent, it shall be labeled, dated and refrigerated upon arrival at the center.
- Bottles of breastmilk and opened containers of unmixed concentrated shall be dated. When there is more than one bottle fed infant, all bottles shall be labeled with the child's name.
- All filled bottles of milk or formula shall be refrigerated until immediately before feeding. Contents remaining in the bottle after a feeding shall be discarded after two hours.
- Formula prepared from powder or concentrate, or an open container of ready-to-feed formula shall be labeled and dated. Prepared formula not used within 24 hours shall be discarded.
- Breast milk may be stored up to 48 hours in the refrigerator or up to two weeks in the freezer before discarding.
- Breast milk shall only be used for the intended child.
- Frozen breast milk shall be thawed under running water or in the refrigerator. Bottles of formula or breast milk shall be warmed by placing them in a pan of hot (not boiling) water for five minutes or in a bottle warmer according to the manufacturers, directions, following by shaking the bottle well and testing the milk temperature before feeding.
- Bottles shall never be warmed or defrosted in the microwave oven.
- Only sanitized bottles and nipples shall be used. Bottles and nipples reused by the day care center shall be sanitized by boiling for five minutes or more prior to refilling or by another method approved by the Department of Public Health or local health department. Nipples are to be rinsed prior to washing.
- No food other than formula, milk, breastmilk, or water shall be placed in a bottle for infant feeding unless otherwise indicated by the child's physician, in consultation with the parent (s).
- When children are exclusively bottle-fed or breast-fed, supplemental water shall be offered.
- Juice may be fed from a cup when the infant is old enough to drink from a cup (approximately six months). Juices shall be 100 percent fruit juice.
- Children under two years of age shall not be fed berries, candies, raisins, corn kernels, raw carrots, whole grapes, hot dogs, nuts,

seeds, popcorn, raw peanuts or peanut butter as these foods may cause choking.

DCFS Infant and Toddler Care Instructions

A written plan shall be provided prior to reassignment for children who are moved to a new group. The development of the plan shall involve the child's parents and the childcare staff in sending and receiving rooms.

- Routines such as naps and feeding shall take into consideration parents' information and wishes about the routines followed at home.
- Infants and toddlers shall be provided a daily program designed to meet the developmental needs of the children in this age.
 - The same staff member shall feed, diaper and play with the child every day to establish interaction and establish continuity in the child's relationship with as few adults as possible
 - Children shall be free to creep, crawl, and toddle and walk as they are physically able. Walkers are not permitted unless prescribed by a physician.
 - Except as allowed in Section 407.200(d)(3), children shall be taken outdoors for a portion of every day unless weather conditions pose a danger such as lightening or extremely high or low temperatures.
 - A variety of toys shall be accessible on low open shelves for the children to use, and these shall be rotated with the stored toys.
 - For awake infants who cannot move about the room, the staff shall hold, rock and/or carry the child at least every 30 minutes and change the place and position of the child and the selection of toys.
 - To avoid sudden infant death syndrome, children who cannot turn over alone shall be placed on their sides or backs unless contraindicated by a physician
 - Information about feeding and elimination and other important information shall be recorded in writing and made available to parents when the child is picked up at the end of the day.
- Cooked carrots, corn, peas, and bananas may be served to infants only if mashed, grated, or pureed.

- Whole milk shall be served to children under two years of age unless low fat milk is requested by the child's physician.
- The use of honey for sweetening infant food is not allowed.
- Staff members shall wash their hands and the child's hands in the manner spelled out by DCFS in the standards before feeding each child.
- Infants shall either be held or be fed sitting up for bottle feeding. Infants unable to sit shall always be held for bottle feeding. When infants are able to hold their own non-glass bottles, they may feed themselves. The bottle must be removed once the child has fallen asleep. Bottle propping and carrying bottles by young children throughout the day shall not be permitted.
- Foods stored or prepared in jars shall be served from a separate dish and spoon for each child.
- Any leftovers from the serving dish shall be discarded. Leftovers in the jar shall be labeled with the infant's name, dated, and refrigerated and served within 24 hours or discarded.
- In accordance with the American Academy of Pediatrics recommendations, solid foods shall be introduced generally between four and six months of age. The time of introduction shall be indicated by each child's nutritional and developmental needs after a consultation with the parents.
- Infants, according to their developmental ability shall be allowed and encouraged to feed themselves. Staff shall provide supportive help for as long as each child needs such help.

Toddler

7:00-8:30 Arrival, handwash
7:30-8:30 Handwash, breakfast and individual play
8:30-9:00 Group Play Time
9:00-9:15 diaper changing handwashing
9:15-9:45 Morning meeting
9:45-10:15 Science, math activities
10:15-10:45 Centers: small group learning activities
10:45-11:00 Diaper changing and hand washing
11:00-11:45 Lunch
11:45-12:00 Clean up from lunch
12:00-2:30 Nap
2:30-2:45 Quiet activities, puzzles, books
2:45-3:00 Diaper changing, handwashing
3:00-3:30 Snack
3:30-4:30 group games, and small motor activities
4:30-5:30 Gross motor play*

5:30-6:00 Individual play, clean up

*denotes indoor or outdoor play

-Diapers will be changed when needed

-Diapers will be checked during each handwashing break

Preschool Classroom

7:00-7:30 Greet children, handwashing
7:30-8:30 Handwash, Breakfast
8:30-9:00 Diaper Check, Social Play
9:00-9:30 Morning Meeting
9:30-10:00 Music and Large Motor
10:00-10:30 Small Group Activities
10:30-11:00 Outdoor Activities*
11:00-11:30 Individual Reading
11:30-12:30 Diaper Check and Lunch
12:00-3:00 Nap
3:00-3:30 Diaper Check, snack
3:30-4:00 Afternoon Meeting
4:30-5:00 Music and Creative Movement
5:00-5:30 Creative Play*
5:30-6:00 Clean up and Departure

*denotes indoor or outdoor play

-Diapers will be changed when needed

-Diapers will be checked during each handwashing break

Preschool Program

In providing a program for toddlers, our teachers understand that these children learn with their whole bodies. They learn more by doing than by being told. Toddlers discover their world on a physical level, so it is expected that they will prefer walking, climbing, carrying objects, dumping, or dropping objects over simply sitting, picking up toys or playing in a designated space. There are numerous activities that challenge and utilize the large muscle groups.

In planning for toddlers, the teachers must be prepared to be flexible and spontaneous. Toddlers are active learners and ready to explore new areas and materials in different ways. Our understanding is that teachers will use the cues of the children to extend the learning opportunities even if they are not the planned activities of the day. The teacher respects this and allows opportunities for the child to be responsible and to make choices.

This teacher also understands why certain behaviors must be limited, and sets limits that are fair and consistent. Expectations for behaviors are developmentally appropriate and allow the child to be challenged yet to feel support from their teacher.

Our teachers, with patience, warmth, and respect redirect toddlers to help guide them towards controlling their impulses and behavior. The teacher draws more attention to a child's appropriate behavior than the inappropriate behavior because she understands that the toddler will act in the way that draws the most attention. The teacher offers positively worded directions to avoid the power struggles. The teacher views herself as a model for how she wants the children to develop.

The teacher recognizes that routine times are important moments to help children learn about themselves and others. An early childhood educator views play as valuable and facilitates this so that children stay interested and move from simple to more complex aspects of play.

The classroom includes materials for children to engage in imaginative play, appropriate art experiences for creative exploration, various manipulatives to develop cognitive and physical skills, as well as building blocks, music, and books. The teacher

respects the child's need for ample time to use and reuse activities because repeated experiences foster competence.

The setting is stimulating and inviting. It offers comfortable spaces for privacy and for interacting in small groups. Children's art is displayed proudly and respected for what it is. The toddlers are encouraged by a knowing adult to care for the belongings and the environment and activities to meet the children's changing needs from day to day.

Pre-Kindergarten Schedule

7:00-8:00 Arrival and Handwash
7:30-8:00 Handwash, breakfast and individual games
8:30-9:30 Group Play time
9:30-10:00 Science, math activities
10:00-10:30 Bathroom, handwash,
10:30-11:30 Centers: small group learning activities*
11:30-12:00 Bathroom break, individual group play
12:00-12:30 Handwash, lunch
12:30-2:30 Quiet time (nap)
2:30-3:00 Quiet activities, puzzles, books
3:00-3:30 Bathroom break, handwash, Snack
3:30-4:30 Group games and small motor activities
4:30-5:30 Gross Motor Play*
5:30-6:00 Individual play and clean up time

*Denotes indoor or outdoor play

The Pre-Kindergarten Program

Preschoolers are usually most responsive to activities in which they are involved in a hands-on manner. Our teachers accept that and design their classroom spaces with learning centers at which children can freely choose whether to participate or not and for how long.

Our quality staff rotates and adds materials frequently to maintain and extend the child's interest. Often our teachers create their own games and activities if commercial ones do not offer the challenge or theme-based approach to the learning topic.

The Preschool room not only maintains developmental checklists across the domains, but we also incorporate domains they will experience in Kindergarten. These domains are language, math, science, music, art, dramatic play, small motor, large motor.

Language/Communication

The whole language approach is our model. This is one in which children are exposed to print and language that is integrated into each activity center. Each classroom offers many opportunities for literacy awareness. Books are readily available for children's use.

Math

Activities include concepts of introductory geometry, seriation, classification, sets, numbers, quantity, length, weight, use of simple graphs, simple addition/subtraction (more/less), and money.

Science

Hands on activities include simple machines, sensory table play, plant, and animal life. Nutrition awareness and weekly cooking activities are offered. Open ended questions by the trained teacher help the children learn how to question, and how to be thinkers.

Music

Exposure to and involvement with simple rhythm instruments is part of our music program. Rhythms are also practiced by

learning of songs and finger plays. Tone, volume, and pitch awareness are also part of the music curriculum.

Art

Exploratory, sensory art activities help the child experience a variety of media. Collages and creating mobiles are offered. Paints, chalks, pencils, paper, marker, glue, paste and play dough are all available in a free choice area for children to use as they wish.

Dramatic Play

From playing house to being a cashier in a pretend grocery store preparing cardboard automobiles in a child sized garage, the children can practice roles that productive adults do.

Small Motor

From the handling of simple tools to completing pegboards, children are continually offered opportunities to develop their small muscles as a prerequisite for writing.

Large Motor

Movement activities including free dance, parachute handling, climbing, crawling, running, and balancing are just a small part of the large muscle program.