



The Children's Treehouse
— Early Learning Center —

FAMILY HANDBOOK

Licensure

The Children's Treehouse Early Learning Center ("Center") is licensed under the regulations of all applicable state and local child care agencies. A copy of the Pennsylvania Department of Public Human Services Code for Child Day Care Centers is available from the Director. The Children's Treehouse Early Learning Center operates to meet or exceed all state and local regulations.

Nondiscrimination Information

The Children's Treehouse Early Learning Center is a for-profit organization serving families with preschool and childcare needs. Admissions, the provisions of services, and referrals of clients shall be made without regard to race, color, religious creed, disability, ancestry, national origin (including limited English proficiency), age or sex. We embrace all students, including those with special needs and challenges.

Hours of Operation

The Children's Treehouse Early Learning Center is open from 6:30am – 5:30pm, Monday through Friday, excluding holidays and inclement weather, although our management reserves the right to close the Center at our discretion. We provide both full- and part-day schedules, as outlined in the payment schedule.

Religious Practices

The Children's Treehouse Early Learning Center is a nonsectarian, nondenominational organization. We do not have any religious affiliation, and we do not provide any religious instruction. We respect the religious beliefs of all families at the Center. We will do our best to ensure that your family's personal and religious beliefs and practices are not compromised. If you have concerns about issues that your child faces at the Center, please discuss it either with the child's Teacher or with the Director.

Confidentiality

All information pertaining to a child and his/her family is at all times kept confidential. Staff and parents may review the child's file at any time for information pertinent to their child.

Bulletin Board

We have a bulletin board where formal documents are posted for the parents' inspection. Our bulletin board is placed inside the front entry door. It is here that we post our license, rules, and violations for viewing. Each child's classroom has a bulletin board with information specific to the child's class such as monthly calendar, daily schedule, daily lesson plans, etc.

Conferences

Parents of children at The Children's Treehouse Early Learning Center are given the opportunity to schedule an official conference with their child's Teacher every fall and spring. A conference is also offered within 30 days of enrollment. These conferences are not mandatory.

Parental Roles and Responsibilities

An orientation meeting is scheduled with all parents upon enrollment, to give parents the opportunity to confer with their child's teacher regarding the developmental and physical needs of their child. The teacher will share classroom information on the early childhood education program and develop communication with the parent.

At any and all times, parents are welcome to observe our programs. Supportive family relationships are essential to providing a good program for young children. Teachers are available for on-going communication with parents by daily contact, parents leaving written notes, or through telephone conversations. In addition, special conferences may be requested with Teachers and/or the Director. Naturally, you are welcome to drop in and visit or observe any time.

Daily Communication

The Children's Treehouse Early Learning Center staff communicates on a daily basis with parents regarding their children's day using the electronic reporting system Tadpoles. All classrooms have a bulletin board for daily communication and classroom reminders.

Community Resources

The Children's Treehouse Early Learning Center keeps current information regarding outside agencies that have the potential to provide beneficial services to our patrons. The Information Packet parents receive upon enrollment includes a Community Resources handout.

Special Needs

In many instances having a child with special needs in a classroom is enriching for all children involved by helping them learn about disabilities and interacting with people different from themselves. We will accept children with special needs when it is determined that we will be able to provide appropriate care for them.

Request for IEP/IFSP

As an active party in an Individual Education Plan (IEP) or Individual Family Service Plan (IFSP) we are willing to work along with parents and outside agencies to implement what is best for the child. Upon enrollment parents are asked if the child has an IEP or IFSP. Should concerns arise during conferences we provide information to parents for further evaluations by outside agencies. Parents may contact the agency of their choice that best suits the situation that needs to be addressed. Parents' signature on the IEP/IFSP Acknowledgement form indicates whether they will or will not provide copies of the IEP form.

Observation

The Children's Treehouse Early Learning Center teachers use the tools provided with the Tadpoles and Teaching Strategies Gold systems. Observations are shared with parents during conferences.

Assessments

The Children's Treehouse Early Learning Center teachers complete the Teaching Strategies Gold assessments for each child in their classroom. Assessments are completed within the child's first 30 days of attendance and every fall and spring. Assessments are shared with parents during conferences.

Transitioning

The Children's Treehouse Early Learning Center uses the information gathered from the observations and recorded in assessments to create smooth transitions between classrooms, into kindergarten or in increasing self-care abilities in school-age children. Based on age and room availability, children are eligible to move up to the next classroom. Conferences are used as a time for parents and teachers to collaborate about the possibility of children transitioning although the ultimate decision belongs to the Director. Some rooms have requirements children must meet prior to entering the class so parents and the teachers work together to help the children

accomplish these goals. Prior to officially transitioning to a new classroom, children spend time in the new classroom on varying days at varying times. For the transition from Pre-Kindergarten to Kindergarten teachers stay in close contact with the teachers from Coatesville Area School District kindergarten classes to make sure that the children are learning all of the necessary skills for kindergarten. Pre-Kindergarten children participate in many activities recommended by kindergarten teachers (i.e. whole group activities) in preparation for the transition to kindergarten. For our school-age children, we incorporate self-care skills into the curriculum and the Teacher and Director work with the parents to address any specific areas of concern (i.e. making snacks or food that do not require oven, learning to use the telephone, emergency responses, etc.). The Children's Treehouse Early Learning Center partners with the Thorndale Fire Company to educate children about safety issues that arise during the early elementary years (i.e. fire safety, walking home from school, answering the door and phone when home alone, etc).

Transferring Children's Records

The Children's Treehouse makes all files available for transfer when a child moves to another facility. We will forward children's records to another facility upon parents' written permission.

Nutrition Policy

The Children's Treehouse Early Learning Center does not prepare meals on site. We do serve the children two snacks per day one in the morning and one in the afternoon. Parents need to pack a lunch and a drink each day.

Transportation Policies

Children will be transported in vehicles using child safety seats following the guidelines of the Pennsylvania Department of Transportation. Passenger doors shall be locked at all times when the vehicle is moving. Smoking is prohibited in the vehicle.

Toy Maintenance

Our toys are cleaned daily and are rotated in and out of the classrooms throughout the year. This helps to both maintain the children's interest and supplements special units of study. Toys, play equipment and other indoor and outdoor equipment used by the children are kept in good repair and free from rough edges, sharp corners, pinch and crush points, splinters and exposed bolts. Children's toys and equipment, including furniture and rest equipment, described as hazardous by the United States Consumer Product Safety Commission are not used by children.

Show and Tell

If your child brings a toy for show and tell, please make sure it has no small parts that could come off and cause choking, and make sure that it is appropriate to the classroom setting (i.e., no weapons). All toys should be safe for children under three years of age. We are not responsible for toys from home that get broken or lost at the center. The responsibility remains with the child and the parents.

Rest Time

All children under the age of six are required to have a rest time. We provide a napping cot and bedding. To decrease the spread of germs our staff will ensure the children's cots are kept 36 inches from each other during nap, the cots sanitized after each use, bedding is washed weekly and soiled bedding is properly handled to prevent contamination.

Television/Movies

We believe that video presentations, when used properly, can be a highly effective educational tool. Therefore, we do use video presentations for special programs used in conjunction with educational themes.

Field Trips

To enhance your child's learning experience, we participate in field trips for fun and learning. Parents are notified one week in advance of any field trip, and the day before a reminder will be sent home. On most such trips, we will ask for parent chaperones. Most field trips incur an additional but reasonable surcharge, and no child is obligated to participate.

Center Closure

You will be given a list of dates for these closures at the beginning of each year.

In addition to scheduled closures, The Children's Treehouse Early Learning Center may close due to conditions that are perceived as potentially dangerous. This includes unforeseen local or national events, utility outages and severe weather. If weather conditions worsen after the Center has opened for the day and it becomes necessary to close parents will be notified to pick up their child to maintain the safety and well being of our staff and families. In instances where it is absolutely necessary, the Center may close at the Owner's discretion, due to severe weather conditions. Parents should call the Center regarding closings in the event of inclement weather or forecasts.

Each family is required to pay the weekly tuition fees, whether or not the child is in attendance. This includes days we are not open or close early.

Emergency Procedures

Upon enrollment you will receive an information letter with an overview of our Emergency Plan and the procedures we will follow regarding your child's safety.

Releasing Your Child

A responsible individual must bring the child into the building in person each day. Be sure that a Teacher receives your children each day. Please do not drop your child off at the door or have them enter by themselves.

We will only release the child to those authorized by the parent or primary caregiver. This must be indicated in your Tuition Agreement and Emergency Contact/Parental Consent Form and they must be over 18 years old. We will not release a child to a minor under any circumstances. A written note or telephone call to the Director is acceptable in emergency cases only. A verbal notice is fine on that day if this person is on the list of those authorized to pick up your child. If the person is not on that list, we must have written permission to release your child.

Please inform your emergency contacts that they will be asked for picture identification. This is not meant to offend anyone, but is simply a measure taken for the child's protection.

Anyone picking up or dropping off children cannot be under the influence of either drugs or alcohol. If a parent or adult appears to be under the influence of drugs or alcohol, the staff of The Children's Treehouse Early Learning Center may request the parent or adult to contact someone else to transport the child safely. If the parent or adult refuses, we have the right to contact the local authorities.

Reporting Absences

It is the responsibility of the parent to call us by 10:00am to report a child's absence. If the parent does not call to report the child absent, we will try to contact the parent to confirm the absence.

Child Guidance Policy

In their early years children learn how to get along with others and what behaviors are appropriate for different situations. We help children learn these skills by providing a good example. We take the preventative approach to discipline that teaches children positive behaviors. Preventative discipline and positive praise improves a child's self-esteem and problem-solving skills and encourages positive social behavior. The first step to preventing discipline problems is to make sure that your child's needs are being met. Children must be comfortable within themselves and with their environment. When kids are not comfortable, they tend to act out, attempting to control their situation, but rarely through effective means.

For the most part, children know the rules, and know what they should or shouldn't be doing. If they could be doing the right thing, they would be. Most misbehavior is simply the result of a child not expressing their needs. Sometimes children make poor choices, often because children are still developing their conflict resolution skills, or their impulse control, or their ability to identifying their own emotions, or one of the many other critical social skills.

However, separation from the group, in the form of a "time out", may be necessary for the benefit of the child and the rest of the group. Teachers use this time to help the child calm down before returning to group activities. We may ask you to work with us to help extinguish a challenging behavior.

Children who are unable to stop being physically or emotionally aggressive may be separated from the group. They can return when the crisis situation is defused and/or they feel ready to behave appropriately and respect others. Respecting others includes not hurting them or making them feel unsafe and not taunting or being emotionally aggressive.

There is never physical punishment or threat of physical punishment. Co-operation and frequent communication between parents and staff provides consistency and promotes a good self image within the child. If behavior problems should occur that we consider to be not age appropriate and/or are unable to resolve the issues in question with the parents, we reserve the right to ask you to withdraw your child from our care. This is to ensure the safety of all the children we care for including yours.

Financial Responsibilities

Registration Fee

The Children's Treehouse Early Learning Center does not charge any enrollment or registration fees.

Tuition Fees and Copays

Tuition fees and copays must be paid for in advance of receiving child care services. Tuition and copays are charged on a bi-weekly basis, and is due on Friday for the following two weeks of services. We will provide a list of payment dates at the beginning of each year.

Deposit (Private Pay Clients Only)

A deposit in the amount equal to one week of child care is due for each child. This deposit will be applied to the child's last weeks of care provided two weeks written notification is received.

Overdue Payments

If payment is not received on the due date, a late fee will be charged at a rate of \$10 per day. All balances must be paid in full or services can be discontinued and legal proceedings can be commenced, at the discretion of the

management.

Discounts (Private Pay Clients Only)

We recognize that the expenses of raising a family can be overwhelming. To help alleviate some of that financial burden, we offer a discount for multi-child families. This amount is deducted from the family's tuition expense only.

Late Pickup Fee

Our hours of operation are from 6:30am - 6:00pm. The charge for late pick-up past your child's schedule departure time is \$25.00 per child for the first 15 minutes and \$1.00 per minute thereafter. If you find yourself running late, please call so we may reassure your child that Mom or Dad is safe, but be prepared to pay the late pick-up charge.

Withdrawal from Program

Withdrawing from the program requires a two-week written notice to the Director.

Payment Problems

Please notify the Director of any problems with your ability to pay your bill. All balances must be paid in full or services can be discontinued and legal proceedings can be commenced, at the discretion of the management.

Denial of Service

If an account becomes severely delinquent, the child will be placed in "Denial of Service," at the management's discretion. When service is denied, the child cannot attend class. However, the parent remains liable for service. The child will be denied service until the situation is adequately corrected, as determined by the management.

Payment Procedure

You may pay by cash, money order or check. If a payment is returned, you will be notified and assessed a \$35.00 returned check fee. Your child will be Denied Services until restitution is made.

Each family is required to pay the weekly fee whether or not the child is in attendance. This includes days that we are not open. This weekly fee ensures that the child's spot is held for him/her.

Tax Statements

Tax statements will be provided upon request, within 48 hours of the request.

Sick Time Credit

No tuition or copay credit will be offered for days that a child is sick.

Discharge of Services

If for some reason you decide to discontinue your child's relationship with The Children's Treehouse Early Learning Center, we require a two-week written notice. This will give us time to fill your child's spot. Payment is due for the two-week notice period whether or not the child is brought to the Center. Any outstanding fees must be paid on or before the child's last day. If legal action to collect fees becomes necessary, the parent(s) will be responsible for legal fees incurred.

Under most circumstance, if The Children's Treehouse Early Learning Center feels it can no longer enroll your

child, you will be given a two-week notice. However, if your child exhibits behaviors that endanger other children or staff, expulsion can be immediate. Examples of reasons for expulsion include (but are not be limited to):

- 1.Failure of parent to pay tuition.
- 2.Failure of child to adjust after a reasonable amount of time.
- 3.Our inability to meet the child's needs without additional staff.
- 4.Failure to provide documentation of state required forms.
- 5.Behavior or abuse that endangers other children, staff or property.
- 6.Continued violation of The Children's Treehouse Early Learning Center procedures.

Indoor Play

Indoor play constitutes the majority of our day. The Children's Treehouse Early Learning Center has a wide variety of age-appropriate toys for children.

Outdoor Adventures

The Pennsylvania Code for Child Day Care Centers expects children to go outside at least once per day weather permitting. Pennsylvania defines "weather permitting" as the temperature/wind chill are above 25 degrees and less than 90 degrees, there is no precipitation falling, and there is no current air quality alert. It is understood that given these parameters there may be portions of some days that do not meet the conditions of weather permitting.

Please dress your child appropriately for the current weather and in play clothes. Washable play clothes and tennis shoes (sneakers) are the most suitable. Footwear such as sandals and flip-flops do not offer the necessary protection and therefore should not be worn. Please remember; kids are kids, and to be kids they have to play, to play they get dirty, getting dirty means they had fun, when they have fun they are happy, when they are happy we have done our job.

In the summer, please pack a swimming suit, sunscreen, hat, water shoes, and a towel.

Things to Bring and Not to Bring

Parents must provide an entire change of clothing (pants, top, underwear, socks) to leave in the child's cubby in the event of spills or soiling. Please mark each item with the child's name and check daily for clothing in need of laundering. When necessary, return a replacement change of clothing the following day of attendance. If your child needs a change of clothing and none is found in the child's cubby, you will be called and asked to bring a set. If your child comes home with an article of clothing that is not theirs, please return it immediately.

It is in the best interests of all if personal items are kept at home. It can create tension and jealousy for other children. Moreover, each child's personal space is limited. It can be distressing for children and staff members when things are lost or misplaced. We cannot assume responsibility for loss or damage to any belongings. When children have a specific "Show & Tell" time in class, they are encouraged to share items. Your child may bring a soft nap toy to sleep with but this must be kept in the child's cubbie and will only be used during nap time.

If a child requires medications of any sort, parents must make arrangements with the child's teacher, as well as with the director. Children are not allowed to self-medicate, and should not bring any medicines with them.

Pacifiers/Bottles

The use of pacifiers for toddlers is strongly discouraged. If absolutely necessary, pacifiers may be used for naptime. All bottles and caps must be labeled. All bottles must be premade and accompanied by a cap.

Car Seats/Strollers

There is no room for the storage of your children's car seats or stroller. We ask that you not leave them at the Center at any time. The Center cannot be responsible for the care of car seats or stroller left on the premises.

Health Policy

Each child must have an initial health examination with an immunization report not more than one year prior to enrollment to the Center, and a follow-up health examination at least once every year after enrollment.

Parents of children who have special needs of any sort will train two staff members to dispense any medications that students might need. In all cases the child's confidentiality is protected.

Medication Policy

If your child is on medication that needs to be administered while he or she is at The Children's Treehouse Early Learning Center, the medicine must be in the original container and labeled with the child's name, the doctor's name, the name of medication, the dosage, the expiration date, and when the medicine is to be given. A Medication Log form must be filled out and signed, giving us permission to give the medication to your child. Both the director and the child's teacher will be responsible for dispensing the medicine, and you must discuss any medications with the teacher and director directly, to make certain that there is no confusion about dispensing the medication. This is particularly true if your child has a substitute teacher for the day. Medication will be administered at the time or with the meal you specify and a written record kept.

Medication administered once or twice per day must be administered at home.

Ill Child Policy

It is very important that sick children be kept at home. We will not accept the child for care if any of the following symptoms are present or have been present within the last 24 hours.

- fever over 101°
- runny nose that is green or yellow
- flu
- unusual rash
- severe cough
- rapid or labored breathing
- severe cold
- vomiting
- yellowish skin or eyes
- diarrhea
- head lice
- contagious illness of any sort that results in child being too ill to participate in daily activities

The child may return to school 24 hours after his or her temperature has returned to normal, 24 hours after the child is no longer vomiting, or 24 to 48 hours (depending on the illness) after the first dose of an antibiotic. If a child receives an antibiotic for an ear infection he or she may return to school immediately if he has been free of other symptoms mentioned for at least 24 hours. *If your child has a communicable disease, such as chickenpox, please inform the Center so we can take the necessary precautions.*

The parent or authorized adult will be notified to pick up the child. If a parent cannot be contacted within thirty minutes, we will contact an alternate from Emergency Contact/Parental Consent Form.

Emergent Care Procedures

Teaching staff are trained in the usage of infant/pediatric CPR and first aid. Minor cuts and abrasions will receive proper care, specifically; they will be washed with soap and warm water, and properly bandaged. Treatment will be logged in the child's daily report and the parent will be notified when the injury occurred. Please note that we are required to log any injuries observed on your child that may have occurred outside of the Center.

If a medical emergency arises, a parent will be contacted before any emergency treatment takes place, unless doing so endangers the child's life. In such a case, necessary steps will be taken, putting the child first (calling hospital, doctor, poison control, and so forth). If a parent is unable to be reached, the other adults designated on the child's Emergency Contact/Parental Consent Form will be contacted. If needed, the child will be taken the nearest hospital.

Cleanliness Policy

At The Children's Treehouse Early Learning Center we take all the universal precautions to ensure the safety of the children and staff. Gloves are worn at all times when handling bodily secretions. Soiled gloves and diapers will be properly disposed of in covered garbage cans. Soiled clothes or bedding will be removed and placed in plastic bags and sent home to be laundered.

Children and staff wash their hands with soap and running water before and after all food preparation, meals, water table play, outdoor play, and toileting or diapering.

Toys are cleaned as needed and sanitized daily with a bleach and water solution.

Smoking

There is to be no smoking or cigarette butts on the premises.

Mandated Reporting of Abuse or Neglect

The Children's Treehouse Early Learning Center staff is trained to recognize the signs of abuse or neglect. If we have reason to believe that a child has been abused or neglected we are required by law to report the abuse or neglect immediately to ChildLine 1-800-932-0313. Within 48 hours, a written report regarding the suspected child abuse or neglect shall be submitted to Child Protective Services.

Staff

The Children's Treehouse Early Learning Center staff completes a thorough application, screening and training process. This includes a criminal record check (Pennsylvania and FBI), child abuse clearance, reference check, and a physical examination. New staff are observed interacting with children and rated on their ability to carry out our mission and philosophy. Only the most qualified and capable applicants are selected and then placed on a ninety-day probationary period while they are closely monitored and evaluated.

There are always personnel on the premises with current CPR and First Aid certification. All staff members participate in continuing education and training as well as ongoing evaluations.

Keystone Stars

The Children's Treehouse Early Learning Center participates in the Keystone Stars Program, sponsored by the Department of Human Services and Office of Child Development and Early Learning. This is a quality improvement program which provides resources for us to improve the educational experience for children and families.

Review and Revision of Policies, Plans and Procedures

The Children's Treehouse Early Learning Center conducts an annual review of the program including the policies, plans and procedures in order to maintain constant quality improvement. Any concerns throughout the year may be brought to the Director's attention and will be addressed.

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