

The Children's Village



Early Learning Center, Inc. FAMILY HANDBOOK

WELCOME:

The Children's Village Parent Handbook is designed to inform families of the policies and procedures that are implemented in support of children's healthy development and to enable a successful home to school partnership.

PHILOSOPHY:

At The Children's Village, our mission is to provide the highest quality care for all of our children in a friendly, warm and healthy environment. We encourage young children's social and emotional progress, along with their intellectual curiosity, to help create lifelong learners. Our goal is to ensure each child's future success in school and beyond.

Our philosophy is based on our ability to understand and implement best practices for children's early development. Our program's curriculum is supported by the nine learning domains organized in the Rhode Island Early Learning and Development Standards (RIELDS). The staff at The Children's Village are required to complete the Foundations for RIELDS, an eighteen-hour training course. Each classroom's lead teacher creates developmentally appropriate, intentional learning experiences, allowing each child to explore and develop at his or her own pace with caring, professional guidance.

The Children's Village strongly believes in family participation and communication. Family members are a child's first and most influential teachers. We understand that children thrive when families and teachers work together on their behalf. In order to create a partnership, we work closely with families of all types to ensure that each child's needs are met.

FAMILY RESPONSIBILITIES:

Families are responsible for being knowledgeable and adhering to policies established in this handbook. Families are asked to keep current with important information and events by reviewing all notes and notices communicated to them from staff and administration.

It is required by the state that each child have a file containing a completed

- Registration application
- Record of a complete physical examination, including up-to-date immunizations, signed by a physician
- Emergency treatment form
- Social resume about your child
- Release of medical information
- Photo release form
- Waiver of Liability

The Children's Village has an open door policy and we welcome your participation in the classroom. Children should be dressed appropriately every day, play clothes are best. Shorts or pants are required under dresses and skirts! Families are responsible for providing a spare, full set of clothes (socks, underwear, shirt and pants), a wholesome, nutritious, ready to eat lunch (see Nutritional Guidelines), and bedding for rest time (taken home once per week to be washed). Please label all personal items with either your child's name or initials.

DCYF requires licensed child care centers to give children an opportunity for outdoor play every day (weather permitting). Please send children in clothing appropriate for the weather. During fall and winter, we ask that families provide heavy jackets, boots, hats, gloves and layers of warm clothing. During the warmer months, children will have ample opportunity for water play.

Therefore, children will need swimwear, a towel and rubber-soled shoes with closed toes for outdoor play. Parents are to apply a thick coat of sunscreen to their child every morning before bringing them to school. Teachers will reapply another layer of sunscreen (provided and labeled by families) after rest time for afternoon outdoor play.

PARENT COMMUNICATION:

Parent-teacher communication is the primary responsibility for families and staff. Through verbal and written communication of information, thoughts and ideas, and by collaborating on activities, projects, and events, parents and teachers strengthen their relationship and understanding. The Children's Village supports communication through various strategies, including

- **Daily Verbal Exchange**
Parents and teachers exchange greetings during sign in and sign out transitions, and convey essential information. Longer conversations can be scheduled for when the teacher is not directly supervising children.
- **Written Communication**
Parent Bulletin Boards, Calendars, Daily Notes, Incident Reports, Monthly Newsletters
- **Electronic Communication**
The Children's Village uses the Brightwheel program to provide parents with classroom information directly to their mobile phones and computers.
- **Parent Conferences**
Parents meet with their child's teacher for a 20-minute conference two times each year to share their perception of the child's development and review each child's portfolio.
- **Family Engagement Activities**
Activities are planned throughout the year, on-site and off-site, to bring families, children and staff together. These events include a Back to School BBQ, Apple Picking, Hayrides, Holiday Performances, Family Bowling Night, Graduation and Field Day.
- **Family Survey**
At the end of each school year or upon termination of care, we will be asking families for feedback about our program and facility. A survey will be provided for you at that time.
- **Parent Advisory Committee (PAC)**
A group of parents that voluntarily meet at least four times a year to ask questions and provide feedback to the center with ways we are doing well and areas that could use improvement.

STAFF:

In each classroom, there is a Teacher with Early Childhood training and experience. All staff members are CPR and First Aid certified, as well as trained in our philosophy and methods. The staff's professional growth continues while employed at The Children's Village by completing a minimum of 20 hours of Professional Development each year.

ENROLLMENT:

The Children's Village has an open enrollment policy. Applications will be accepted throughout the year. When necessary, a waiting list is actively managed. A separate *sibling waiting list* is maintained; siblings are prioritized as a space appropriate to their age becomes available.

Children need to be at least 6 weeks of age to be enrolled in our program. Enrollment for Preschool requires that a child be fully potty-trained and is three years old. All children need to have current immunization records and a physical required by law BEFORE enrollment at The Children's Village.

The application process begins with a meeting with the Director or designated person. You will receive a tour of the center and receive an application packet which needs to be completed and returned prior to your child's first day of school.

If you are interested in enrolling in our program, a \$35.00 registration fee and non-refundable tuition deposit is required to secure placement. The tuition deposit consists of first and last week tuition payments. If space is not available, you will be placed on our waiting list and contacted when a space becomes available.

PAYMENT POLICIES:

For your convenience, we offer automatic withdrawal which is our preferred method of payment. You can choose to pay weekly, bi-weekly or monthly. Families are responsible for a processing fee of \$1.75 per transaction. All information will be secure.

If you choose to pay by check, tuition is due on Thursday mornings for the following week. Please leave your payment in our tuition box in the lobby. Late fees will apply for payments not received in a timely manner. Payments that are continuously late can result in termination of care for your child. If there are special circumstances, please make an appointment with the Director to discuss arrangements.

Late payments:

Any late payment not received by Thursday of that week will result in a \$20.00 late fee. A child may be dismissed from the school if their parent or guardian is two-weeks delinquent on their tuition.

Returned checks:

All checks returned from the bank will incur a \$30.00 return check charge. All returned checks and fees are to be paid in cash or credit/debit card only.

Unexpected Closures:

Parents are responsible for tuition regardless of holidays, national pandemics, illness or days cancelled due to the weather.

Vacation Week:

There will be an allowance of one-week vacation without charge for full time students. Vacation credits commence 6 months from your child's start date then annually from that point.

Child Care Assistance Program:

We do enroll children and families who receive financial aid from the state. Upon enrollment, families should present the CCAP page of their Benefits Decision Notice to confirm eligibility with a certificate number. If at any time your child becomes Ineligible, it is the family's responsibility to contact the Department of Human Services to rectify the status of eligibility. Copays (if applicable) follow the same rules as tuition payments.

DISENROLLMENT:

Parents are required to provide a minimum two week written notice when disenrolling their child, or pay the equivalent. We reserve the right to dismiss a child, without notice, for reasons such as severe disciplinary problems, non-compliance with policies and procedures, or other inappropriate behavior exhibited by an adult or child. Our goal is to provide the highest quality of early education and care. The Children's Village makes a strong effort to work with families in crisis, to find real and reasonable solutions that will support children and parents. However, there are times that a particular program may not be suited for your child.

CHILD ABUSE AND NEGLECT:

The Children's Village is mandated to report any signs of abuse or neglect of a child in our care. Staff are held to a high standard to assure children under their care are safe and are required to report concerns of maltreatment by others. To report child abuse, call the RI Department of Children, Youth and Families' Child Protective Services (CPS) hotline at 1-800-RI-CHILD/ 1-800-742-4453.

ATTENDANCE:

Hours of Operation:

The Children's Village is open Monday through Friday from 6:30am to 6:00pm. Our center is closed for all federal holidays unless otherwise communicated. A list of closings is available on Brightwheel under "Calendar" or a paper copy may be requested. Please inform a staff member if your child will not be attending due to an illness or unforeseen circumstance via email, phone, or through the Brightwheel app.

Drop-off and Pick-up:

Upon enrollment, families will receive a key tag that will allow you to securely enter the building during hours of operation. Each key tag requires a \$10.00 refundable deposit which will be returned when the key tag is returned at disenrollment.

During drop-off, please make sure your child is supervised by you at all times until signed into the program and placed with a teacher in a classroom. Children are not permitted in the foyer or playground without supervision. We ask that parents allow themselves enough time to escort their children into the school, sign them in and be sure they are supervised. **We ask that all children are at school and ready to begin by 9:00am as that is when our learning experiences and curriculum starts for the day.**

In compliance with DCYF licensing regulations and to ensure the safety and supervision of your child, please sign your child in and out each day. Each classroom has an iPad where you will sign your child in/out using a four-digit code provided to you by Brightwheel. Codes can be personalized under the profile section in your app.

The staff at The Children's Village will not release your child to anyone not on your child's Emergency Treatment form authorization list. A government issued photo ID is required of any new person picking up the child. Please have it ready to show to the staff on duty as requested.

Late Pick-up:

The Children's Village requires that you stay within your designated times for drop off and pick up. If you need to change these times, a two-week notice is required. This assures that our staff to child ratio is always in compliance. In the event parents are unable to pick up their child and depart on time and by 6:00PM, the child's account will be charged a late fee of \$10 for every five minutes. A courtesy call is required for any unforeseen circumstances that may occur such as

traffic or inclement weather. Our center closes promptly at 6:00pm. We ask that you arrive no later than 5:50pm for those children enrolled until 6:00pm.

INCLEMENT WEATHER/LATE OR EARLY CLOSING:

The Children's Village follows the Exeter/West Greenwich School department when determining closures due to weather and/or other emergencies. Depending on the individual situation, we may decide to open although the public school has closed. Closures will be communicated to you through the Brightwheel app and announced on local news stations.

NUTRITIONAL GUIDELINES:

Toddlers, Preschool, and PreK Children:

The Children's Village promotes good nutrition for all. We provide a nutritious snack every morning for each child. We receive weekly deliveries from Munroe Dairy. Children are offered 2% milk twice daily, during morning snack and lunch. Water is available at all times throughout the day.

It is important that each child comes to school with a healthy, balanced lunch consisting of fruits, vegetables, protein and grains. We strongly discourage gum, candy and sugary drinks. If you do send juice in with your child, please choose 100% fruit juice. For more information, please visit www.letsgo.org and www.choosemyplate.gov.

Infants:

Families are responsible for 100% of the food offered to children in the Infant room, thereby controlling their child's exposure to new foods that might lead to allergic reactions. This may include breast milk, formula, bottled or purified water, rice cereal, oatmeal, jarred baby food, solid foods, snacks or meals from home. Age appropriate snacks are available for infants with permission from parents (ie. Cheerios, Puffs, etc.). Bottles also need to be provided, however, plates, bowls, cups with lids and utensils are not necessary.

Whole milk is available for infants and does not need to be provided by families. Staff will work with parents and create an individualized plan when an infant is ready to transition to milk. For more information, please visit www.letsgo.org and www.choosemyplate.gov.

Individualized Nutritional Care Plan:

Children with special health and dietary needs are required to provide a written nutritional plan from their child's health care provider. This plan will be reviewed by administration, classroom teachers and any direct care personnel. The Children's Village will be required to implement the guidelines within a child's nutritional care plan insuring the safety and privacy of each individual family.

Allergies:

The Children's Village is a NUT FREE school. Please keep this in mind when packing a lunch for your child, or providing snacks for special occasions. This includes peanuts as well as tree nuts such as hazelnuts, almonds, cashews, walnuts, pine nuts, etc.

If your child has an allergy, or develops one, please notify and discuss in detail with the director. An Allergy Action Plan, signed by parent and doctor must be on file and updated every year. Staff will be trained in handling allergic reactions including the administration of anaphylactic medications.

DISCIPLINE POLICIES:

Research has proven that when schools work together with families to support learning, children tend to succeed not just in school, but throughout life. The Children's Village is committed to the social and emotional well-being of each and every child. Our goal is to assist families in the development of children's relationships with adults and peers, their sense of personal identity and self-confidence, and their ability to regulate their emotions and behavior.

Behaviors:

The Children's Village utilizes a program wide Positive Behavioral Interventions and Supports. This discipline procedure begins with Infants and continues through to our PreK children. Our goal is the prevention rather than the intervention of inappropriate behaviors. We reward children who display good behavior with our "token" system. Staff is strictly prohibited from using any type of corporal punishment, verbally abusing any child, depriving a child of food, or punishing a child during toilet accidents. The Children's Village follows a four-step approach to discipline:

- **MODEL:** Adults model pro-social behavior and appropriate language, and demonstrate problem-solving and appropriate risk taking.
- **PREVENT:** Adults prevent misbehavior through attentive, compassionate supervision and through the design of the curriculum and the learning environment.
- **COACH:** Adults help children identify their feelings, and redirect children to different activities if they have trouble exhibiting self-control to be safe with peers. Adults will coach by asking calmed children to identify what would have been a better decision.
- **REPAIR:** Adults support children's reflection of events and behaviors, and facilitate child-to-child conversation to name and acknowledge feelings and the actions that have impacted a peer's experience. Adults will encourage repair by inviting children to consider a positive action that demonstrates taking responsibility for the feelings and experience of the other person (or thing).
 - This might look like cleaning up a mess before moving on to play.
 - This might look like repairing a torn book or replacing a broken toy.
 - This might look like supporting first aid for a friend they injured by getting the ice pack.

The Children's Village counts on parental support and cooperation with the classroom teacher for the success of your child's education. It is possible that some children may exhibit consistent behaviors that are detrimental to the ongoing safety and security of the other children in the classroom. This may include aggression toward peers, such as biting, hitting, and kicking. We will handle these situations discreetly and with compassion, and in partnership with the family. In the event that a child's ongoing behavior in child care poses a risk to themselves or to the other children in the program, the following steps will be taken:

1. A meeting will be held with the child's parents, classroom teacher and Director to discuss the behaviors.
2. A behavior plan will be created and signed by all parties consisting of supports and strategies to rectify the child's behavior, community resources that may be of assistance and a timeline for the behavior plan.
3. A second meeting will take place to discuss the child's progress and to modify the strategies, if necessary.

In the unlikely event that behaviors do not respond to the efforts of teachers and parents, The Children's Village reserves the right to terminate enrollment immediately.

Biting:

Biting is a natural developmental stage that many children go through. It is usually a temporary condition that is most common between thirteen and twenty-four months of age. The safety of the children at The Children's Village is our primary concern. The school's biting policy addresses the actions the staff will take if a biting incident occurs. The steps are as follows:

1. We will intervene immediately.
2. Staff will help the child who was bitten. The wound will be assessed, cleaned with soap and water, and an ice pack will be applied. If the skin is broken, the bite will be covered with a bandage.
3. Staff will talk to the child who bit and remove the child from the situation for a brief period of time. We will tell the child in a calm but firm voice, "We do not bite, biting hurts." or "I do not like it when you bite people. You hurt him/her. S/he's crying."
4. Notify parents of all children involved. We will not share the names of the children to protect the privacy of all families.

More often than not, children will resolve the biting behavior. However, should the biting continue without improvement, the steps listed under the **Behaviors** section above will be followed.

HEALTH POLICIES:

Good health is a combination of physical, emotional and social well-being. Parents are responsible for protecting and maintaining the health of their children. The Children's Village staff will work with parents to promote, maintain and improve the health of all children.

Health Requirements:

In order for a child to attend The Children's Village, parents or guardians must continuously provide the center with their child's:

- Record of Immunization as required by the State of Rhode Island Department of Health.
- Report of a physical exam completed by a physician.
- Emergency contact information.
- Pertinent health information such as allergies and/or chronic conditions.

Hygiene and Universal Precautions:

To help reduce the risk of infection and the spread of germs staff is required to properly wash their hands with liquid soap and warm water after each diaper change, after assisting a child with toileting, after personal toileting, after cleaning nasal discharge, before preparing or serving food, before and after using messy play materials and before and after administering first aid.

Disposable gloves are required for many of these activities as well.

Staff is responsible for children's hand washing after toileting, before eating, after wiping or blowing their nose, after touching any bodily fluid, before and after using messy play materials and upon entry from the outdoors. Single use cloths or towels are used in the infant room for washing children's hands after diaper changes as well as faces and hands before and after eating.

Illness:

The Children's Village makes every effort to create a healthy environment for your child and to emphasize good health habits. We ask that parents assess their children's health and wellness based on their behavior as a first indicator of ill health before arriving at the child care center. Please do not send your child to school if he or she is not able to participate in the usual daily activities. If upon arrival teachers identify that the child is not well enough to attend school that day, the child will be sent home with the parent.

If your child becomes ill while at The Children's Village, they will be isolated from the rest of the children. Parents will be notified and asked to come and pick up the child as soon as possible and within one hour. Children may return to the center after they have been symptom free 24 hours.

Parents may not bring a child to school if they exhibit **any** of the following symptoms and until the child is symptom free for 24 hours.

- **Fever:** A fever of 100 degrees or higher. Fevers are generally an indication that the body is attempting to fight off infection. Child may return when they are fever free without the help of a fever reducer.
- **Nasal Discharge:** A clogged or runny nose with green or yellow mucus. The only exception is if the child was seen by a pediatrician and has a doctor's note.
- **Diarrhea:** Runny, watery stools or stool that contains blood and/or mucus. Diarrhea can be extremely contagious and may be caused by viruses, bacteria or parasites. Medical attention may be necessary. Child must be diarrhea free for 24 hours and resumed their normal diet.
- **Vomiting:** Twice or more within 24 hours. Child may return 24 hours after vomiting has stopped.
- **Conjunctivitis (pink eye):** Symptoms include itchy, watery eyes or discharge. The child may return when they are symptom free or 24 hours after treatment has begun.
- **Lice or Scabies:** A letter from a physician is required stating the child is free from infestation.
- **Skin Conditions/Rash:** Children must stay home with any patterns of small bumps, blisters, blotches, or lesions (including: Chicken Pox, Fifth's Disease, Hand-Foot-Mouth Disease, Ringworm, Impetigo, Measles, Rubella, Scarlet Fever). They may return once they are symptom free or if a doctor's note is provided. Children with Chicken Pox may return when lesions are dried and crusted. Children with Hand-Foot-Mouth Disease may return to school once they are fever free.
- **Strep Throat:** May return 24 hours after treatment has begun and the child is fever free for 24 hours.
- **Bronchial Infections:** Such as RSV, Bronchitis, Croup, and Pneumonia. Children need to be symptom free and must have a doctor's note to return to school.
- Other minor illness for which a child is too sick, unusually lethargic, irritable or persistently crying, having difficulty breathing or showing signs of possible severe illness should be seen by a physician and receive a note prior to returning to school.

Medication:

To ensure the health and safety of each child, we will follow these guidelines when administering medication:

- Signed consent by the parent or guardian to give prescribed and non-prescribed (over the counter) medication.
- Signed prescription order written by a licensed physician or practitioner.
- Prescription medication must come in the original pharmacy labeled bottle showing the child's name, the name of the medication and instructions for administering.
- Over the counter medications such as Tylenol, Ibuprofen and Benadryl or their generic equivalents may be given according to the standing orders from the child's physician. Written permission must be renewed yearly.

- Under no circumstances should a child have any medication in the school without the Director's knowledge.
- Please refer any and all medication information to the Director.
- Staff will document every occurrence of medication administration, per DCYF regulation.

Injuries:

When a child sustains an apparently serious injury, the supervising teacher will notify the Director. The following procedures will then be followed:

- If the severity of the injury demands immediate medical attention, the Director will contact 911 and request an ambulance.
- The child's parent or guardian is immediately notified about the injury and directed to meet their child at the appropriate medical facility.
- The Director, or another appointed staff member, will accompany the child to the medical facility and await the arrival of the parent or guardian.

When a child sustains an apparently minor injury, the supervising teacher will notify the Director. The following procedures will be followed:

- The supervising teacher will administer any first aid necessary.
- The teacher will then complete an incident report and send to parents through Brightwheel.
- If appropriate, it may be suggested that the child be taken for a follow-up visit to their physician.

I have read The Children’s Village Family Handbook, and agree to comply with the policies and procedures contained therein.

(Please initial)

___ I have been provided a copy of and thoroughly read The Children’s Village Family Handbook.

___ I read and understand, and agree to comply with the policies and procedures.

___ I understand and agree that The Children’s Village and employees are not liable for bodily injuries or illnesses suffered by my child(ren) or damages to personal belongings, unless the injury, illness, or property damage was the direct result of willful negligence on the part of those operating the Center. I waive my rights to commence any legal action against The Children’s Village. Upon acceptance of tuition payment, I agree this will be a binding contract between both parties.

(Optional)

___ I give permission for my child’s image to be used in photographs within the center (e.g., bulletin boards, crafts, documentation).

Parent Signature

___/___/___
Date

A copy of this page will be maintained in your child’s file.