

Happy Home Handbook



Philosophy/Welcome

I strive to provide your child a happy, safe, home environment with fun, early learning opportunities. I believe that children should feel safe at all times, that it is important to establish positive relationships with children in order for them to learn, and that parents and child care providers need to work together in order to provide the most positive experience for the children.

Communication

It is very important for us to have open communication at all times. I will let you know if I have concerns about your child. I send home daily notes to let you know about your child's day, although I also intend to take time at pick up to talk with you, too. I ask that you also keep me informed of any changes in routine, difficult sleep nights, changes in eating, etc., that may affect your child's day with me. If you have concerns that you wish to discuss outside of your child's hearing, feel free to call after drop off. I respect your privacy and will not share information with other families about your child or family. In return, I expect you to respect my family's privacy and our time together after business hours.

Authorized Pick-up

Parents are welcome to visit my child care program at any time during the hours of operation unless prohibited by a court order. If so, I will need a copy of the order. Children will only be released to persons listed on the enrollment form. If anyone other than the child's parent or someone who is listed on the enrollment form is to pick up a child, I need to be notified in writing or by a telephone call. The person picking the child up may need to show a driver's license or other picture ID.

Transportation Policy

Because my first responsibility is to protect the children in my care, I want to make sure children are transported safely. An appropriate car seat must be provided by the adult transporting each child. If no car seat is available, the adult will be asked to go obtain one and then return to pick up the child. If I suspect the adult is under the influence of alcohol or drugs, I will ask the adult to either call another authorized person to pick up the child or call a cab. Although I understand that legally I cannot keep a parent from taking their child, if I feel the child is in harm, I will immediately call the police and report the unsafe driving situation.

Required Forms

For your child to begin care, there are two forms that must be completed. In your packet you will see an Emergency Medical Form and a Health Form. Please do not attempt to bring your child to care without those forms completed.

Hours

My hours are 7:30 a.m. – 5:30 p.m., Monday through Friday. On occasion I may provide care as early as 7:00 a.m., but only if prior arrangements have been made. At 5:30 p.m. I am “off work” and with my family. I ask that you respect my hours and know that after my 10-hour work day, I am ready to be finished. If you have unfinished conversations with other parents after 5:30 p.m., please continue them outside. I do ask that everyone remember to sign their children in and out on the attendance sheet posted by the front door.

Staff

On occasion my mother, Jill Smith, does substitute care. She has had the in-service training required by regular staff and is fully aware of our emergency procedures and routines of care. There will be times when she visits us in order for the children and her to become familiar with each other. I will give you notice when I have scheduled her to substitute.

Mandated Reporter

As a family child care provider, I am required by both federal and state laws to report any suspected child abuse, neglect or sexual abuse.

Activities

Children learn through play. I enrich their learning experiences by reading books, providing art supplies, dramatic play props, music experiences, science exploration, and both large and small motor activities. To foster their learning, I look for teachable moments in our everyday environment and have meaningful conversations with the children about their real-world experiences. That said, I consciously plan moments when I can teach the skills necessary for kindergarten readiness.

Schedule

Infant schedules change throughout their first two years of life. The key is for us to communicate together on what works best for your child. However, a schedule will not take precedence over your infant's needs. If they are tired, I will let them nap. When they are hungry, I will feed them.

I do follow a routine to assist children in regulating themselves and to foster security that a regular schedule can provide. In general, our day typically looks like:

7:30 – 8:15 arrival and free play
8:15 – 8:45 handwashing and breakfast
8:45 – 9:00 toileting
9:00 – 9:15 circle time
9:15 – 10:00 small group/table/art activities
10:00 – 10:30 handwashing and snack
10:30 – 11:15 outdoor play or large motor
11:15 – 12:00 large group/music/dramatic play
12:00 – 12:30 handwashing and lunch
12:30 – 1:00 toileting and story time
1:00 – 3:00 napping and quiet time
3:00 – 3:30 handwashing and snack
3:30 – 4:30 outdoor play
4:30 – 5:30 free play and departure

Fee Payment

Please refer to the contract for information on fees and payment expectations.

Supplies From Home

Your child will need two sets of clothes (appropriate for the season), a supply of diapers, toothbrush, and sunscreen and insect repellent if you wish them applied. Please label all supplies and replenish them as needed.

Vacation & Holidays

I will give you at least three months advanced notice of the dates I will be taking vacation. The list of paid holidays are located on the contract. If you think you will have trouble finding alternate care during this time, I will be happy to give you a child care referral number for Child Care Aware[®] of Eastern to assist you. Please refer to the contract for fee and payment information as it pertains to holidays and vacations.

Illness

Please keep your child at home when they are sick. Out of respect for my health and the families in my care, I will refuse care to children who have a fever of 100.5 or higher, an unexplained or contagious rash, head lice or nits, vomiting, diarrhea, pink eye or if there is drainage from ears. I also reserve the right to refuse care for a child that appears too ill for care (fatigue, inconsolable crying, etc.)

If your child becomes ill while in my care, I will call you and expect you to pick him/her up right away. If I am unable to reach you, I will begin calling your back-up contact numbers. I do my best to isolate ill children from the other children until they are picked up.

If you need me to administer medication to your child, I will need an Administration of Medication form signed by you. This includes pain relievers, diaper rash cream and teething gels. There are some copies of this form in your packet, but I also keep a supply by the sign-in sheet.

Meals

I participate in the Child and Adult Care Food Program, which means that I provide nutritionally balanced meals and receive three visits a year from Food Program staff. The menus are posted in the kitchen. I ask that you do not bring food to child care unless prior arrangements have been made with me.

Guidance

Children will be treated with courtesy and respect in my home. Starting when they are very young, I begin teaching children how to ask for assistance from me and problem-solve with their peers. Most discipline issues can be managed by the environment, such as making sure there are enough hands-on activities for everyone, and that kindness is modeled by all adults who enter. I will never withhold food, use shame, intimidation or physical punishment to manage behaviors. I also do not use a reward system, but I do use language that teaches encouragement, negotiation skills and empathy.

Naps/Rest Time

I provide a two-hour nap time and require that all children rest on their mats a minimum of twenty minutes. If children are unable to fall asleep or wake early during the nap time period, I provide quiet activities for them to choose from. On Fridays, I allow educational T.V. time in the family room for those who wake early.

Toys From Home

I ask that you do not allow your child to bring toys from home. It is very difficult for young children to share, and even more difficult when it is their own toy. If your child manages to sneak a toy in, I will put it in a safe place to be retrieved at departure.

Birthdays & Celebrations

We celebrate most holidays with a small party at afternoon snack time. I encourage you to join us for celebrations, but please let me

know ahead of time if you want to bring treats. We also celebrate birthdays, but I do ask that you do not bring any presents.

Termination

Please refer to the contract for information on termination procedures.

Changes to Policies

I may on occasion make changes to the policies. I will give you a one week notice before they go into effect.

Thank You

Thank you for your time and consideration in reading and abiding by the policies stated in this handbook. Together we can partner to provide the best care possible for your child during these very important early learning years!