THE CHILDREN’S CENTER OF

 LAKE FOREST



 PARENT’S HANDBOOK

 **THE CHILDREN CENTER OF LAKE FOREST**

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**MISSION STATEMENT**

**THE CHILDREN’S CENTER OF LAKE FOREST IS A STATE LICENSED DAYCARE AND PRESCHOOL FACILITY. WE STRIVE TO PROVIDE THE QUALITY CARE THAT YOUR CHILDREN DESERVE. OUR STAFF IS PREPARED THEORETICALLY AND ARE EXPERIENCED IN PROVIDING AN EDUCATIONAL PROGRAM FOR CHILDREN IN A SAFE AND LOVING ENVIRONMENT THAT WILL MEET THEIR DEVELOPMENTAL NEEDS. WE RESPECT EACH CHILD AS AN INDIVIDUAL REGARDLESS OF ORIGIN, COLOR, OR RACE. WE MAINTAIN OPEN COMMUNICATION WITH PARENTS SO AS TO BE ABLE TO POSITIVELY CONTRIBUTE TO EACH CHILD’S OPTIMUM GROWTH AND DEVELOPMENT. WE LOOK FORWARD TO MAKING YOUR FAMILIES EXPERIENCE A FRUITFUL ONE.**

**TABLE OF CONTENT**

* Enrollment……….…………………………… 4
* Admission & Fees…………………………...5-9
* Communication………………………………..9
* Absences due to Illnesses…………………10-11
* Daily Schedule Activities…………………….12
* Nap Time……………………………………..13
* Meals & Snacks…………………………...13-14
* Toys……………………………………….14-15
* Potty Training………………………….…15-16
* Cleanliness/Hygiene………………………….16
* Medication………………………………..16-17
* Injuries……………………………………17-18
* Fire/Tornado Drills…………………………..18
* Permanent or Temporary Termination……18-19
* Behavior and Guidance………………19-24
* Disciplinary/Guidance Policy……………25
* Covid-19 Action Plan

**EROLLMENT**

The Children’s Center of Lake Forest is open Monday through Friday from 7:00 a.m. to 5:30 p.m.

We are closed on the following days:

* New Year’s Eve
* New Year’s Day (or the day after depending on the day it falls on)
* President’s Day (February)
* April In-Service Day
* Memorial Day (May)
* Juneteenth Day (June)
* Fourth of July
* August (In-Service Day)
* Labor Day (September)
* Indigenous People’s Day (October)
* Thanksgiving and the Friday after.
* Christmas Eve
* Christmas Day (or the day after depending on the day it falls on)

If Christmas Eve or New Year’s Eve falls on a weekday, we will be close, If Christmas Day or New Year’s Day fall on a Saturday, we will close on the Friday prior, and if it falls on a Sunday, we will be closed on the following Monday.

**ADMISSION & FEES**

There is a non-refundable registration fee of $60.00 that must be paid prior to the admission date along with a week tuition to reserve your spot. The deposit will be applied towards the last week of enrollment. If you decide you no longer need our services after paying the deposit, which is a week tuition, only ½ will be refunded. We also require a 2 week notice if you have decided you no longer need our services.

Tuition Payments are due by Tuesday afternoon of each week through the Brightwheel app. There is a convenience fee if you choose to play through Brightwheel. There is a late payment fee of $15.00 that must be included with your payment if your payment is late. Families may also pay with check or cash. A $25.00 fee is due for any returned checks.

Families have the option to pay weekly, bi-weekly, or monthly. Please let us know so we can adjust through Brightwheel, but it must be in advance of services provided.

If an account becomes delinquent, the Director will partner closely with the family to resolve any issues in a timely manner. If the account is continually delinquent, the Director has the authority to deny services until the account is cleared.

Full Tuition payment is required for all families even if your child is absent due to any illness or vacation. After a year of full-time enrollment, families receive a free week that may be used anytime after the year. Pleasenotify the Director or office administrator before use of the vacation week.

There is a $1.00 per minute charge for picking up your child after 5:30 p.m. If late pickups become a recurring problem, the center’s director will try to discuss ways to resolve the problem and if it continues, we may need to terminate your childcare. Late fees will be charged through the Brightwheel app. If your child has not been picked up by 5:40 p.m. and we have not received a phone call, we will call the emergency contacts. If the child is still in our care after 6:00 p.m. with no contact from anyone, the Director will need to contact the Police Department.

**FINANCIAL ASSISTANCE**

The state of Illinois assists eligible families with financial assistance. The center requires that families keep up to date with all the requirements for this program if eligible.

The center will not provide care if your paperwork is expired unless you have already previously spoken with the Director about the matter and have come to an agreement of approval.

**VACCINATION**

The state of Illinois requires all children in a daycare facility to be properly vaccinated by a licensed doctor. We ask documentation of all up to date vaccinations and routine physicals prior to the child’s start day at the center. If all of those documents are not received prior to their start date, we will not be able to begin their care at our center.

**CLASSROOM SUPPLIES**

No backpacks are allowed for children 15months and older due to DCFS regulations and the safety of the children. Infants are still allowed to bring in a diaper bag if needed. Parents are required to bring in change of clothes for in the event of any accidents. Changes of clothes including socks (an extra pair of shoes if available). Infants will need diapers, wipes, formula, and baby food. Classroom teachers will notify families if supplies are running low.

**CUSTODY**

The Department of Children and Family Services requires all children’s files to have emergency contacts in the event parents cannot be reached at in a needed time. If either parent is not authorized to visit or pick-up your child, we require a copy of custodial documents stating the legal rights of either parent so that we may comply with full protection and safety of the child.

**Transitioning Into Our Center:**

The Children’s Center of Lake Forest staff will work together with the new parent to ensure that the transition into our center for their child is pleasant and smooth. Parents shall shareinformation they have about their child and what support he or she needs. The first days may be shorter to begin with, to allow children to not be overwhelmed and to have a positive experience. We ask that parents to have some flexibility during these first days of transition and attendance.

**Transitioning Into a New Age Group and Caregivers:**

Children are transitioned into a new classroom according to space availability, age, as well as physical, social, and emotional development. When preparing to transition a child to a new class, the classroom teachers will first discuss this with the center’s director and parent. If we have the permission from the parents, then the child will then get to visit the other classroom for short times to meet the teacher and other children in the classroom. They can explore and become familiar with the environment. A transition letter will be sent to the parent informing them about the transitioning of their child to the new room and inviting them to meet the new teacher(s).

**KEYPAD ACCESS**

For the safety of the children, every new family has a four-digit access code that allows the family of the enrolled child to enter the facility. This code may be given to someone that will be picking up your child on a regular basis. Others may ring the doorbell and a picture identification will berequested at the time of pickup. We ask parents to notify the center if a different person will be picking up their child(ren). Please provide the center with a power of attorney if someone is not allowed to pick up your child for any personal reason. Only the main entrance door is to be used to enter and exit the center. Another exit door is located at the end of the hallway between the Older Infant room and Four-year classroom. Doors in the classroom are used for emergencies only.

**COMMUNICATION**

Brightwheel app is used to report daily activities that families can see during the day. The staff will update during the day and report on any changes or reminders. Parents are always welcome to call at any time to check on their children. Parent-Teacher conferences are available upon request. Please feel free to schedule one with your child’s teacher.

Please notify the center of any absence, illness, or late drop by calling the center or messaging through the Brightwheel app. There is no late drop off after 11:30am unless it is excused, as this may cause distractions to the other children and the classrooms.

It is mandatory to sign in/out your child on the Brightwheel app at drop off / pickup. This is mandatory for anyone dropping off or picking up a child.

**ABSENCES DUE TO ILLNESS**

Please notify the center if your child will be absent due

to any illness.

Per Lake County Health Department regulations, children who are sick and were taken to the doctor and diagnosed with a contagious virus, is required to notify the center so that we can notify other parents to ensure the health and safety of all the other children in our care. Children are asked to stay home and return to the center with a doctor’s note stating the child is able to resume to normal day activities. The following illness policies will be strictly enforced, per health regulations, Department of Children and Family Services, and as well as the safety of our children and staff. If any child is showing any of the following symptoms, we will call the parent to notify them and possibly request for them to come pick up their child dependent on the severity of those symptoms.

Examples of associated symptoms include, but are not limited to:

1.) Fever (100 F. higher)-Child needs to be fever free for 24 hours without any medication.

2.) Nausea or 1 episode of vomiting.

3.) Diarrhea: 2 runny or watery stools, within 1 hour

4.) Sore throat, loss of voice, hacking or continuous coughing.

5.) Children with pink eye will be sent home immediately and may return after being on medication prescribed by a doctor and be on medication for a full 24 hours.
6.) Unexplained Rash.

7.) Excessive Crankiness: Child is irritable, excessive whining or crying, wants to be constantly held, or requires more attention than we can provide.

8.) Lice (may not return child to care until no more nits are spotted).

9.) Communicable diseases (chicken pox, roseola, conjunctivitis, mumps, measles, influenza, etc.)

If your child has any illness that is contagious, you will be required to pick up your child as soon as possible. Your child will be required to be medication free for at least 24 hours of that illness before returning to the center.

Parents of a child with a diagnosed contagious condition (measles, head lice, pink eye, mumps, chicken pox, etc.) are asked to notify us as soon as possible so that the center may alert parents to watch for symptoms in their own children.

**DAILY SCHEDULE OF ACTIVITIES**

Below is a GENERAL schedule of a typical day and is subject to change dependent on the classroom.

7:00-9:00AM Arrivals and drop-offs

 in classrooms.

 Breakfast. Guided play.

 & activities.

9:00-9:15 AM Bathroom/handwashing

9:15-9:30AM Morning Snack

9:30-11:30AM Learning & Outdoor activities

 Or Gym.

11:30-2:45PM Lunch Time/Nap Time/Bathroom

2:45-3:00PM Afternoon Snack

3:00-5:30PM Learning & Outdoor activities

 Or Gym.

Parents can pick up their children at any time of day.

However, we ask that drop-off and pick-up time be consistent. Please notify us if any changes in schedule will take place to reassure that the teacher-child ratio is always incompliance with the DCFS regulations.

**NAP TIME**

Every effort is made to adjust to the individual needs of all children regarding their daily nap. Children are allowed to take a book to their cots at the beginning of nap time. Parents may provide the child with a special book, plush toy, and favorite blanket in the Toddler room through the Five’s room. Per DCFS regulation we cannot allow any blankets or sleep sacks in the cribs other than the mattress linen during all nap times in any infant rooms. Infants nap at their own time; Older Infants have 2 naps: a morning and afternoon nap. Toddlers through the Four-year-old room nap between 12:30PM-2:30PM; The Five-year-old room have quiet time from 1:00PM-2:30PM. Children who do not nap are required to rest quietly on their cots. Infants sleep in separate cribs. We provide crib sheets and are washed daily. We provide cots and cot sheets for children in the Toddler room through the Five-year-old room. Cot sheets are washed once a week or daily if need. Children’s blankets will be sent home at the end of the week for washing.v

**MEALS & SNACKS**

The Center provides breakfast between 7:00AM and 9:00AM. We provide morning snack, lunch, and an afternoon snack. The snacks will either be a fresh fruit or vegetable, which will also include water or milk. We partner with a food catering company called Quality Catering that ensures that all the meals that are served to the children meet CACFP government standards. We are avid participants in this government program. CACFP sets nutritional standards that must be met and with Quality catering, they have a dietician on staff that ensures those standards are met. Special snacks are only allowed for birthdays or other special occasions such as, classroom holiday parties. We require everything brought to the center to be pre-packaged, fresh fruit, or something healthy. Please talk to the teachers on days you would like to bring a special treat to the center. Please be aware that some children have allergies so please check with the teacher of your child’s classroom to ensure you are able to bring in a treat that ALL children can have. If this procedure is not followed, we are not able to give out the treats brought in so we do not leave any child out. Lunch is provided at 11:30AM for infants and toddlers and between 11:30AM-12:00PM for two’s and older children. We positively encourage children to eat what is served. Please notify the class teachers if your child has any food restrictions such as allergies or religious beliefs so we can properly accommodate your child. Families have an option to provide their child’s lunch and snacks daily due to allergies or religious beliefs.

**TOYS**

Home toys are NOT ALLOWED. Toys can become problematic and a distraction to the children and the classrooms. If toys or play jewelry are brought, please be aware that the director will hold on to it and be returned to the parents at the end of the day. Toy weapons (guns, knives, swords, squirt guns, etc.) are not permitted and will be turned away at the door. Only one plush toy is allowed for nap time for children 15months and older. We are not responsible for any loss or breakage of personal items.

**POTTY TRAINING**

**PLEASE NOTE: We will only assist your child in potty training if you have successfully begun training at home for one week prior.**

We will follow through and encourage your child while in care. Potty training will be done in a relaxed manner with the cooperation of the family. We require that the child be at least 2 years of age and **MUST ALSO** show signs of readiness. Positive reinforcements and consistency must be continued at home.

The child must be kept in pull-ups at all times. Please keep in mind that the activity level here at the center can distract your child from responding to an urge to use the potty, more so than at home. Therefore we will use diapers until your child can and will announce the he/she needs to use the restroom and can control his/her bladder and bowels for a few minutes beyond the announcement. It is required that parents provide pull-ups and a few extra change of clothing.

**Proper clothing**

Do not bring your child in panties or underwear until he/she has naptime and bedtime control established. During potty training your child needs to be dressed in “user friendly” clothing as much as possible. The best items are pants with elastic waist. Please DO NOT dress your child in the following:

* No tight clothing
* No shirts that sang in the crotch
* No pants with snaps and zippers
* No overalls or bib type clothing
* No belts
* No one piece outfits

**CLEANLINESS/HYGIENE**

We do our best to maintain a safe, clean, & healthy environment

To encourage proper health hygiene, we ask parents to have their child’s hand washed before entering the room at drop off time. Our staff reinforces proper hand washing throughout the day. Including, after bathroom breaks, before and after meals or snack time, as well as before/after gym or outdoor time. Staff clean and sanitize toys and hard surfaces regularly throughout the day.

 **MEDICATION**

We are not able to administer any sort of medication to any child without a doctor’s note and a medication form filled out by the parent.

If your child is on medication and needs to be taken while he/she is at daycare, the medicine must be in the original container and labeled with the child’s name, doctor’s name, name of medication, dosage, and when to be taken. Only the center director is allowed to administer any medicine to the child. No over the counter medication is allowed unless you have a doctor’s note. If the child is required to take over the counter medication, stated by a doctor, then it needs to be a brand new medication with a sealed cap. Do not leave medicine in cubbies or diaper bags. Please make sure all medicine is handed to the Director or Teacher for safe storage.

**INJURIES**

Incident reports are written for all incidents that occur at the center. The teacher that is present at the time of the incident is required to sign the form as well as the parent consenting that they have read and received that report. The parent is then given their copy of the form and another copy goes in the child’s classroom file as well as the center’s file.

If an incident occurred at home, please notify teachers at drop off even without any bruise appearing, please advise the center in case a bruise does appear later, or a serious ailment occurs so the teacher can write out an observation form. This observation form requires the signature of the observing teacher as well as the parent of that child. If there are any unusual markings on any child, the director will call the parent and fill out an observation form.

**SUSPECTED CHILD ABUSE/ CHLD NEGLECT**

The state of Illinois requires all employees of a daycare to report any and all cases of suspected child abuse or neglect. We do this for the protection of your child and the children in our care.

**FIRE AND TORNADO**

Fire and tornado drills are practiced at least quarterly. For proper evacuation of the center, children are required to nap with their shoes on so as to follow all safety precautions needed to ensure the safety of all children. During our fire drills, the fire marshal is present to ensure that we are practicing our routines safely and correctly.

**TEMPORARY OR PERMENANT TERMINATION OF SERVICES**

We may terminate care if the terms of our center contract and policies in this handbook are not followed.

Some are examples below (but not limited to):

* All forms in the child’s file are not completed after 3 or more consecutive attempts from the office manager to fill them out. This would call for temporary termination until all of the requested documentation is received.
* If the child is having behavioral issues that are a safety concern to the teachers and other children, we try to work with the parent in partnering to figure out the best method to work with the child in changing this behavior. If the behavior becomes a danger to the staff and children, then we may request permanent termination.
* If childcare tuition is not paid on time and no financial arrangements are made with the Director, then this could result in temporary termination until that bill is cleared or permanent termination for non-cooperating parents.
* Excessive late pick-ups can result in permanent termination if no effort is made to change the situation.
* Any and all disrespect to staff or other children will result in permanent termination.

**BEHAVIOR AND GUIDANCE**

The Children’s Center of Lake Forest subscribes to disciplinary policy built on mutual trust with teacher and parents working together to help children developmentally mature in the best positive way.

**TECHIQUES:**

In helping to direct the child toward self-discipline, the following guidance techniques are used.

1. Positive statements are used in giving direction to behavior.
2. Redirection is consistent with the child’s needs.
3. The child is given opportunity to make choices and solve problems.
4. Suggestions are given in time to prevent conflicts.
5. Comparisons of children are avoided.
6. Unacceptable behavior is clearly explained and the child is told what is acceptable. Approval of acceptable behavior is clearly expressed.

**RESPONSIBILITY:**

Discipline of children shall primarily be the responsibility of core classroom staff in accordance with the individual child’s age stage of development, and knowledge that the teacher has of the child’s needs. We also view guidance as a team effort and an ongoing learning process, so feel free to ask for help if you need support in any child guidance situation including your own child.

**METHOD**

Disciplinary methods used shall be based on guidance to help the child develop inner control, self-responsibility, respect for the rights of others, as he learns to cope with daily experiences of living and working with others. ***UNDER NO CIRCUMSTANCES WILL CORPORAL PUNISHMENT BE*** ***USED OR TOLERATED BY ANY ON SITE!!*** Verbal abuse will not be allowed- this means no yelling, no obscene language and no put downs between adults or adults and children. Spanking and withholding food cannot be used to discipline children.

**RESPECT**

The staff shall accept and respect each child for who she/he is as a unique individual. If a child behavior becomes unacceptable, this shall be explained to the child in a positive way without humiliation, fright or physical harm. The child shall then be helped to find a better way of resolving his/her problems or meeting his/her needs. Respect for his/her feelings shall be maintained.

**LISTENING BREAK:**

A listening break is a technique that will be used sparingly and carefully. It will be used primarily when children hurt others or themselves. Aggressive behaviors need to be stopped as quickly as possible and a listening break will only be used when a child has repeated the aggressive behavior more than twice and the teacher has already explained to the child that such behavior is not acceptable. Listening break will be one minute per year of age of the child.

**BITING:**

When biting occurs, these immediate steps will be taken:

* Separate the child who bit and the bitten child
* The staff will use a proper tone of voice and facial expression to show the child that biting is unacceptable.
* Staff will attend to the child who was bitten, will apply first-aid as needed. If skin is broken, staff will wash with warm water and soap. Staff will apply ice pack or cool cloth to help prevent swelling. Both set of parents will be notified by teacher or director. An incident report will need to be filled out for both children.
* Another staff member will keep an eye on the child who bit to prevent repetition of the behavior.

**The child who repeatedly bites:**

Repeated biting behavior, regardless of child’s age and development stage, needs to have a behavior management plan made by caregiver and parents together.

**When should you be concern about biting?**

* If the child doesn’t care that biting hurts, or if he/she seems to get pleasure from it.
* If a child keeps getting bitten.
* If a child keeps biting the same child.
* If child repeatedly bites and unusual distractions or positive discipline method fail to change biting behaviors.

**Misbehavior**

It is very important that a child’s development is nurtured through caring, patience and understanding. While caring for your children, we may have to respond to your child’s misbehavior. Hitting, kicking, spitting, hostile verbal behavior and other negative behavior that hurt other child or themselves, are not **PERMITTED.**

In response to these behaviors, we will not use:

* Threats or bribes
* Physical punishment, even if requested by the parents.
* Deprive your child of food or other basic needs.
* Humiliation or isolation in response to misbehavior.

**We will:**

* Respect your child
* Establish clear rules.
* Be consistent in enforcing the rules
* Use positive language to explain desired behavior.
* Speak calmly while bending down to your child’s eye level.
* Give clear choices.
* Redirect your child to a new activity.
* Call a conference with parent/guardian to discuss ways on how to improve child’s behavior so as to have both parents and staff on the same page.

If your child’s behavior is very disruptive or harmful to himself or other children, we will discuss the issue with you privately. If the situation can be resolve, the child may remain enrolled. If we are unable to resolve the issue, we will give you a phone call and ask that your child be picked-up for the day. Staff will work and coordinate with the parent to try every possible way to discourage the inappropriate behavior. If no improvements are made on the child’s behavior, the Children’s Center of Lake Forest will have no other option but to terminate care.

**DISCIPLINARY / GUIDANCE POLICY**

I/We\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ parents/guardian of\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

have read and fully understood the above amendment to the Disciplinary/Guidance Policy.

Signature: \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

If there are any question or concerns that are not answered in this handbook, please feel free to ask the

Director or Office manager.

Thank You!

 **COVID-19 ACTION PLAN**

* Daily health checks will be conducted for children, parents, and staff upon entering the center. Temperature will be taken and recorded upon arrival and departure anyone with a 100.4-degree temperature will be asked to leave and seek a health care provider for evaluation.
* A visual inspection will also be done upon arrival for any signs of illness which could include flush cheeks, rapid breathing, or difficulty in breathing (without any physical activity) fatigue or extreme fussiness.
* The staff welcoming the children each day will also be conducting a verbal check to ensure that the child does not have any fever, shortness of breath or cough, sore throat, vomiting, or diarrhea.
* Any child or staff member suspected of having COVID-19 or diagnosed with COVID-19 will be excluded from the facility, symptoms of COVID -19 are fever (temperature greater than 100.4F) Chills, sore throat, runny nose, cough, shortness of breath, muscle aches, headaches, vomiting and diarrhea.
* If the child or staff member is diagnosed with COVID-19 he or she may not return to the center until ALL three of the following are met
* Individual is free from fever without the use of fever-reducing medications for at least 24 hours.
* It has been at least 5 days since the onset of the individual’s illness.
* If the child or staff member has symptoms concerning for Covid-19 and subsequently is determined by a medical provider not likely to have COVID-19 infection. The child or staff member may return to the center if the following is met.
* No fever for 24 hours without the use of fever reducing medication.
* Negative test for COVID-19.
* A note from a medical provider documenting no clinical suspicion of COVID-19 infection.
* Any parent, child or staff member with close contact to a person suspected or diagnosed with COVID-19 shall be asked to please stay home for 5 days.