



Childcare Center Parent Handbook

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Philosophy

At Stepping Stones Childcare Center we would like to be there to help your child grow every step of the way. Children grow in many different ways and we at Stepping Stones will strive to help every child feel loved while reaching their full potential at their own pace. Stepping Stones believes that love and learning go hand and hand. Therefore, our staff provides a nurturing environment that will make a child feel safe and cared for. Because learning is also an important component of a child's development, we will teach basic skills and concepts that will be helpful in a child's future. As a licensed childcare facility our objective is to provide a safe, well-supervised, positive environment for our children.

At Stepping Stones, our parents are very important to us. We value your opinions and appreciate suggestions. The staff at Stepping Stones looks forward to meeting with you and establishing a relationship in which we can work together.

Admission Policy

1. The parent must fill out the enclosed forms and return them to the Director before the child's first day of care unless noted.
 - A. *Infant - Preschool Age- Health Appraisal Report*
 - B. Child Information Card
 - C. Signed last page of handbook
 - D. Submit a copy of Immunization records,
copies as vaccines are updated for infants
 - E. *School age children only - Health verification form*
2. Determine attendance and payment schedules.
 - A. Make advance payment for week of upcoming care and or 1 month tuition.
 - B. Pay one time enrollment fee of \$25.00 per family required to establish services.

WHAT TO WEAR:

Children should wear clothes that are easy for them to manage, suitable for seasonal weather conditions and clearly labeled with your child's name. Children should wear casual, washable, play clothes.

Infants and toddlers may require multiple outfits.

Suggested outdoor wear: Spring - Fall: Slacks, sweater, sweatshirt, head covering

Winter: Snowsuit, mittens, boots, head covering

Summer: Sweatshirts for cool mornings, t shirts, shorts

Our center participates in recess throughout the year. We do not go outside if the weather is below 25 degrees Fahrenheit (this includes the wind chill). So please, send your children with clothing that is appropriate for all weather. Taking children outside actually prevents illness! Being confined to air that is constantly recirculated is what makes most of us sick in the winter. Fresh air is great for burning energy and for killing germs!

WHAT TO BRING:

1. A change of clothes: pants, shirt or dress, socks, and underwear. Please write your child's name on each item. Infants & Toddlers will need bibs, diapers, wipes, and/or pull-ups.
2. All children that will be napping while in care will need a blanket, labeled with their name. They may also bring one comfort item for napping such as a special sleep animal, etc. **BLANKETS MUST BE TAKEN HOME EVERY FRIDAY FOR LAUNDERING AND RETURNED ON MONDAYS.** This is the parent's responsibility. Crib sheets will be washed by the center in Drecht as needed.
3. Candy and other goodies: We do not recommend sending these items except on special occasions and ask that you make prior arrangements with teachers.
4. No guns, knives, or any kind of toy weapons will be allowed.
5. Birthdays- Birthday is his or her special day. The center will always acknowledge each child's birthday. If the parent wishes to provide a special treat, please make arrangements with the teachers.

MEAL PLANS: [Applicable to Full Day]

Infants and Toddlers: Breast milk, formula, other beverages, and food must be provided daily in sanitary, ready to feed bottles, or beverage containers. Please be sure all items are labeled with your child's name. Any food or beverage left at the end of the day will be discarded or sent home.

Preschool- school aged: We ask that you supply a well balanced sack lunch for your child. . Please send a variety of food for your child. We will be able to warm up or microwave any meals sent in as long as they are in a microwave safe container. Please have everything labeled and include milk or juice for both meals. It is not necessary to send silverware with your child's meal, the center will supply these items. When children arrive at the center they will be served their breakfast. Parents are not required to bring a breakfast, but encouraged to bring in a morning snack or breakfast item for their child. We serve lunch at 12:00. **ALL LUNCHES AND BREAKFASTS ARE SUPPLIED BY THE PARENTS.**

The center will offer both a morning and afternoon snack and juice for the children. We will supply a 9:30 a.m. snack and a 3:30 p.m. snack, which will be nutritionally sound following the state of Michigan rules for a well balanced snack. This snack will also include

milk or juice supplied by the center. **Please alert us of any food allergies your child may have.** We encourage children to try all foods before allowing for substitutes. Infants and toddlers make snack on demand. Please send your child(ren)'s snacks daily.

DISCIPLINE POLICY:

Running, loud voices, gun play, fighting, biting, physical or verbal abuse are not considered acceptable behaviors at the center and are not allowed. In general children who are misbehaving may be hungry, tired or bored. After these three areas of concern are addressed, and if problem continues will redirect the child into a different activity. Redirecting often times takes a child's mind off the upsetting or instigating behavior and allows them to refocus on another more positive activity.

However, it may be necessary to remove a child from the group to discourage this kind of behavior. The child will be allowed to leave the group/activity and remain in an area of the center he/she is comfortable in, supervised by a staff until he/she is ready to rejoin the group. Outdoor and learning centers will not be taken away from him/her. We also encourage the child to apologize to the child that has been mistreated. Children are not punished corporal. This prohibits by law the use of hitting, shaking, biting, pinching, or inflicting punishment such as humiliating, shaming, or threatening a child. This also prohibits depriving a child of meals, snacks, rest or toilet use and confining a child in a confined area. Stepping Stones staff employs only positive teaching methods which employ praising children for good behavior and encouraging self-control, self-direction, self-esteem, and cooperation.

POLICIES, PROCEDURES & Scheduling:

Payment for child care services is required in advance. Payment for the upcoming week of care is due on or before Friday. There will be a \$15.00 week late fee for past due accounts. If full payment is not received after one week of being late, then Stepping Stones will terminate your child's enrollment until full payment is made. A service charge of \$20.00 will be added for all returned checks. After 2 returned checks the center will require cash payment only. **Your child's schedule is due on Thursdays at 5:30 pm for the following week. If we do not hear from a parent, we will assume the past week's schedule applies. If you make schedule changes for any reason other than illness or family emergency, you will be responsible for full payment of all scheduled hours.** If extended absence is needed, for example, planned vacation time, 1 week advance notice is required to ensure no charges. In the event that there has been no cancellation of services for 3 days, we reserve the right to fill your child's space. NOTE: Special consideration will be given if a child should experience an extended illness or family emergency. However, arrangements must be made with the Director within 3 days. A fee of \$10.00 per 15 minutes after closing that you are late will be charged. The charge must be paid at the time the child is picked up.

HOURS AND HOLIDAYS:

Stepping Stones Childcare Center's hours are from 6:30am to 5:30pm Monday through Friday. The center is closed on and will require no payments on New Years day, Memorial

Day, Independence Day, Labor Day, Thanksgiving Day, and the day after Thanksgiving, Christmas Eve, Christmas day, and New Years Eve.

MEDICATION:

All medication must be given to our staff by the parent and be in the original container with the prescription label intact and legible. Sample medication must be accompanied by a physicians note indicating who the medication is for, dosage, and date prescribed. This policy is firm. All over the counter medication also requires a medication form. The parent must sign a permission slip requesting administration of the medicine.

ILLNESS:

If the child has a fever, is vomiting, or has diarrhea we ask that you do not bring them to the center until 24 hours after the symptoms subside. If your child runs a fever over 100.5 degrees or becomes ill with anything other than a cold, we will call you or your back up person and ask you to pick the child up immediately. If your child has any contagious condition, he/she will not be allowed to return to the center until either condition has cleared or with written consent from a physician. If your child has been given an antibiotic for treatment, he/she may return to the center after the medication has been given for 24 hours. For example, if your child starts the medication at 3:00pm on a Monday, he/she would not be able to return to the center until Wednesday morning. Stepping Stones Childcare Center reserves the right to require a physician note if we suspect the child is ill or still contagious before accepting that child back into the center. If a parent fails to comply with this request the child will be withdrawn from the center.

OUR POLICIES REGARDING THE RETURN TO CARE OF CHILDREN WHO HAVE BEEN ILL IS FIRM. CHILDREN WHO HAVE BEEN SENT HOME THE DAY BEFORE WITH A FEVER, DIAHREA, OR VOMITNG MUST REMAIN HOME THE NEXT DAY TO BE SURE THE SYMPTOMS HAVE SUBSIDED. THIS IS A COURTESY TO ALL OUR FAMLIES TO ENSURE THAT ALL THE CHILREN STAY HEALTHY AND TO MINIMIZE THE SPREAD OF INFECTIONS.

Our health policies and procedures will be posted on the parent's bulletin board at all times and you are expected to read and understand all the information. Any questions regarding this procedure and policy should be directed toward the Director.

SICK DAYS:

Families are allowed 10 sick days per family per year. An absence will qualify for a sick day under the following condition. The child's parent must call the center by 8:00am the day of the child's absence to notify the center that the child will not be in day care that day. The parent must also state when the child is expected to return to day care. If the child is still ill on the expected return day, the parent must once again call the center prior to 8:00am to confirm the child's absence. Sick days may only be used when the child is sick, not for any other purpose, such as unexpected schedule changes or days off. Please be courteous of the use of your sick days, so we can keep this policy around!

Basic Rules

1. Parents are invited and encouraged to visit the center in addition to your regular planned attendance. You are invited to eat lunch with your child and also observe his/her activities.
2. All special instructions for the day should be in writing and given to the person in charge of your child. Verbal instructions can sometimes be forgotten or mixed up when several children are being dropped off at once.
3. All children enrolled at the center have varied arrival times. We make every attempt to schedule staff according to these times. Therefore, we are asking that parents call the center if your child is going to be coming to the center more than 1 hour later than expected arrival. This policy is simply a courtesy, so that we may better schedule our staff.
4. Children will be released only to those individuals listed on the child information card and showing proper identification.
5. Any information that a parent discusses with the Director or staff regarding their child is strictly confidential.
6. A two week written notice given to the Director is required should a parent terminate services with the center. If the Director does not receive a two week written notice, parents will be required to pay amount equal to two weeks of service. We reserve the right to immediately withdraw childcare services after discussion with the parents.
7. We encourage parent-teacher conferences to discuss each child's progress and special needs or concerns. If you would like to set up a conference, please set up a convenient time with the Director.
8. The center is not responsible for any toys/electronic devices brought from home.
9. Parents are expected to bring their child into the center, sign them in and make sure they are under supervision before leaving the center. When picking a child up from the center, a parent must sign the child out and leave with the child.
11. Should the management of Stepping Stones determine that a child cannot adjust the center's program, the child will be withdrawn from enrollment and this agreement will be terminated.

I give the staff at Stepping Stones permission to:

Apply sunscreen, bug spray, and/or antibiotic ointment on minor scrapes to my child(ren) as needed per the staff's discretion.

To use any images of my child, be it video or still image, solely for the purposes of Stepping Stones Childcare promotional material in publications in print, website, and/or facebook page.

To take my child(ren) on scheduled field trips. I understand I will be notified prior to each trip. (applicable to ages 3-12 years)

I have received a copy of the enrollment packet, which included the Licensing Notebook Notice and the Health Care Policy, for Stepping Stones Childcare Center, L.L.C. and agree to be governed by them in their entirety.

Parent Signature

Date

Parent Signature

Date

Child's Name

Date of birth

Child's Name

Date of birth