



Parent Handbook

CHILDREN'S NOOK DAY CARE & PRESCHOOL CENTERS

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Statement of Purpose and Philosophy

Note: Each Children's Nook is unique. Therefore, some policies may be subject to change.

The Children's Nook is a private child development center, serving children of working parents, parents enrolled in educational or training programs, and those who need support in childrearing. Its purpose is to work closely with these parents in order to provide consistent, nurturing care for their children according to each child's developmental needs.

Our philosophy at the Children's Nook is to support parents in their need for safe, nurturing care of their children, and to provide a program that fosters each child's developmental needs. Emphasis is placed, therefore, on a safe, healthy, and caring atmosphere created by a team of teachers knowledgeable through both experience and education in the development of young children.

This knowledge is implemented in the daily program that encompasses all areas of development-emotional, social, physical, and mental. The program has as its primary focus the fostering of each child's self esteem that gives confidence, the motivation to learn, and the ability to establish cooperative relationships with children and adults.

A child's experience at the Children's Nook is one of the initial steps to success, not only in formal education but also in later adult interaction and undertakings.

You, as a parent, may go to work reassured your child, although a member of a larger group, will be seen as an individual, whose unique needs, learning style and growth will be addressed by competent and caring professionals, and, most importantly, your child will be safe and happy.

I. Hours of Operation

The Children's Nook is open five days a week, Monday through Friday, throughout the year except for designated holidays and scheduled closings. (Please refer to Section III, Scheduled Facility Closings.) The center opens at 6:30 am and closes promptly at 6:00 p.m.

II. Scheduled Facility Closings

The Children's Nook will be closed on the following holidays. Please keep in mind the weekly tuition will remain the same.

- New Year's Eve
- New Year's Day
- Good Friday
- Memorial Day
- Independence Day
- Labor Day
- Thanksgiving Day and the next day
- Christmas Eve and Christmas Day

III. Enrollment

The Children's Nook serves children from infants to after-school age. Parents may choose from the following time options according to their work or school schedules providing such a time slot is available at the time of enrollment.

- a) Full Time daycare – 5 days a week
- b) Part Time daycare (20 hours or less) – morning and afternoon spaces are available
- c) After-school care

We strive to provide a positive experience for each child by offering an experienced, nurturing staff, low staff to child ratios, and individualized developmental programming. In that we are not able to guarantee the most appropriate placement for every child, the Director reserves the right to withdraw any child whose needs are not being sufficiently met by the design of our program. The Director will work with the family by identifying other possible resources that may better serve the child's needs.

IV. Attendance

Children are expected to attend the Children's Nook on a regular basis in accordance with the days and times scheduled with the Director. Please notify the Children's Nook if your child will be absent for any reason.

Tuition must be paid regardless of attendance except vacation time. Exceptions may be made in cases of prolonged serious illness at the discretion of the Director. Requests must be accompanied by a statement from a physician regarding the child's inability to attend.

V. Arrival and Departure Policies

- a) Arrival: Each child must be accompanied in to the Children's Nook and signed in on the daily attendance log located at the front desk. Please assist your child in putting away his/her belongings into his/her cubby. Alert staff of your arrival and any information that needs to be shared.
- b) Departure: Each child must be accompanied out of the Children's Nook by a parent, guardian, or authorized person and signed out on the daily attendance log. Alert staff of your departure. We also encourage you to make contact with a staff member regarding your child's day. Please remember to check your child's cubby/folder daily for any belongings or notices, which need to be taken home.

VI. Authorization to Release Policy

The staff at the Children's Nook strives to create a safe, secure, and supportive atmosphere where families may leave their children and feel confident in the care they will receive. It is for these reasons the policy regarding pick up procedures is strictly followed. In order for someone other than yourself to arrive or depart from the Children's Nook with your child the following procedures must be followed:

1. We must have a written, signed and dated statement indicating who will be dropping off or picking up your child.
2. The person's name must appear on the authorization form.
3. The person must be at least 18 years of age.
4. They must be familiar with our sign in and sign out procedures.
5. Proper identification must be shown to the director before the child will be released from the Children's Nook.
6. The person is responsible for the child once they leave the Children's Nook.

In the event of an extreme emergency, we must receive a phone call which includes the name and description of the person to whom you are allowing us to release your child.

If there is a particular person(s) you feel may attempt to take your child from the Children's Nook without your permission, please alert the Director. This information will remain confidential among staff members.

VII. Late Departure

The Children's Nook closes promptly at 6:00 p.m. Children enrolled part-time in the mornings are to be picked up no later than 11:30 am Those enrolled in the full-day or afternoon programs are to be picked up and signed out by 6:00 pm. A late charge of \$1.00 per minute will be required for any child picked up after closing time. This is payable in cash only to the staff member present. Consistent late departure will result in your child's dismissal from the Children's Nook.

VIII. Emergency Closing

The Children's Nook will be closed at the discretion of the Director whenever necessary due to severe inclement weather or reasons of safety and health. In the event of any future hurricanes or other natural disasters, emergency closings will be broadcasted on *WCIV 4* or *Channel 2 News*. Also, if Berkeley County School District, Charleston County School District, or Dorchester County District #2 schools close due to any threat of a natural disaster the Children's Nook will also close.

IX. Tuition and Payment Policy

Childcare fees must be paid one week in advance and are due by closing each Friday; if payment is not received by 6:00 pm on the following Monday, then a \$20.00 late fee will be added. If tuition it is not in by Tuesday morning by 6:30 am your child will be withdrawn from the program. Tuition is due whether a child is present or absent from the program except in the following two situations:

- a) Tuition may be waived if a child is out for a significant period of time with a serious illness. Note: Fees will be waived only if a doctor's note is supplied.
- b) Tuition may be waived during an approved period, e.g., vacation time. (Please refer to Section X, Vacation Policy.)

X. Vacation Policy

The Children's Nook recognizes the varying work and vacation schedules of the parents we serve. Parents receive two weeks vacation throughout the calendar year. Vacation days not taken are not cumulative from year to year and not retroactive if scheduling changes are made during the year. If your child attends day care on a vacation week full tuition will be charged. Also, vacation time must coincide with a tuition week (Monday through Friday).

Vacation time will only be approved if the Director is notified 5 days prior to the child's expected absence. Less notice will result in the regular fee being charged for the absence.

XI. Health Regulations

Our health policies have been established with the assistance of South Carolina Health Services and in compliance with the South Carolina State Health Recommendations.

Parents enrolling their children in the Children's Nook must provide proof of immunization. The immunization form must show the date on which your child was immunized against diphtheria, pertussis, tetanus, polio, measles, mumps and rubella. The HIB vaccine is recommended but not required. A Physician can give more information regarding the HIB.

Please note: Every time your child is immunized it is your responsibility to obtain an updated copy of his/her immunization form for the Children's Nook. Failure to do so will result in your child being withdrawn from the program until the new form is received.

XII. Your Child's Health

How a child feels is an important determinant of behavior, performance, and ability to learn. Children's Nook strives to maintain a healthy environment and CANNOT provide proper care for sick children. The following are additional guidelines created by the Children's Nook, and are strictly adhered to by the Director and the staff.

Fever	24 hours with normal temperature
Viral/Bacterial Infection	48 hours after antibiotics or until all symptoms are gone
Measles	4 days after rash onset
Conjunctivitis	48 hours after starting treatment
Impetigo	48 hours after starting treatment
Upper Respiratory	48 hours after starting treatment
Strep Throat	48 hours after starting antibiotics
Ear Infection	48 hours after starting antibiotics
Sinus Infection (green or yellow discharge from the nose)	48 hours after starting antibiotics If you do not take you child to the doctor he/she must stay at home until the nose discharge is clear.
Diarrhea	48 hours, 24 hours with formed stool
Vomiting	48 hours, 24 hours without vomiting
Chicken Pox	6 days after the onset of the rash or until lesions have crusted over

Fifth's Disease	6 days after the onset of the rash or until lesions have crusted over
Slap's Disease	6 days after the onset of the rash or until lesions have crusted over
Hand, Foot, and Mouth	6 days after the onset of the rash or until lesions have crusted over
Scabies	6 days after the onset of the rash or until lesions have crusted over
Lice	After treatment and ALL eggs (nits) have been removed. Your child will be checked upon arrival, if any eggs are found your child will not be admitted back to day care.
Vaccinations	Children may not return to Children's Nook until the next day.

If your child becomes ill during the course of the day you will be contacted immediately. You must pick up your child within 1 hour of being notified. Sick children in attendance will be isolated promptly from the group, but will have continuous supervision by a staff member.

XIII. Administering Medication

We will administer only those medications required by your child during his/her time at the Children's Nook. If it is necessary for our staff to administer a medication – prescription /nonprescription – we require a note from your child's doctor. All medications must be hand delivered to the staff at the time of arrival. If you do not hand the medication and signed authorization slip to your child's teacher we will not administer the medication. All medication must be in the original container. No first dose of any medication will be given at the Children's Nook. The center can administer only 1 Nebulizer treatment a day.

All medication administered at the Children's Nook will be logged, including: the child's name, date, medication, dosage, time of dosage and name of person administering the medication.

If a parent is unable to comply with this required procedure, he/she is welcome to come to administer the medication to his/her own child.

The parent/guardian must authorize the child's doctor to accept calls from Children's Nook in the event of a medical emergency.

XIV. Accidents or Incidents

If a child is injured during the day and medical attention is required, the parent will be notified immediately. An accident/incident report from the teacher will be written and signed by all parties involved. It is the parent's responsibility to keep emergency contact information up to date.

XV. Withdrawal Procedures

Two weeks written notice will be required to withdraw your child from the Children's Nook for any reason other than an extreme emergency. Any debts owed to the Children's Nook must be paid in full prior to withdrawing.

XVI. Discipline Policy

Children's behavior is often influenced by their developmental stage, environment and/or frustrations. A constructive guidance and discipline approach will be used to monitor and adjust children's undesirable behavior. The Children's Nook will help children learn to develop socially acceptable and appropriate behavior by encouraging the development of self-control, self-confidence, positive self-esteem, cooperation and sensitivity to others. The basic techniques of our approach fall in two categories- prevention and guidance.

Prevention measures are planned in advance so undesirable behavior is limited and include:

1. Arranging the physical environment to encourage appropriate behavior and to foster independence in children.
2. Developing a balanced schedule that provides for a variety of activity levels, indoor and outdoor play, individual and group time, self-selected and teacher directed activities.
3. Planning activities that foster children's different learning styles and provide a challenging, yet successful experience for the child.
4. Establishing consistent, fair limits with children to help them control their own behavior.

Constructive guidance and discipline strategies are tailored to meet the individual differences in children and include:

1. Helping children to understand the logical consequences of their actions in a no-punitive manner. Ex. If a child writes on the wall, he would be expected to wash it off.
2. Redirecting children engaged in an inappropriate behavior to an acceptable activity. Ex. A child who is throwing water in the water table may be asked to see how much water a certain container will hold.
3. Ignoring inappropriate behavior is not overly disruptive or harmful to others.
4. Reminding children of expected behavior by stating the pre-established rule. Ex. We walk in the classroom and run outside.
5. Helping children to resolve problems through expression of feelings, thinking of alternative solutions and possible effects of taking those alternatives.
6. Time out is used not as a punishment but as a time to calm down, get control, talk about feelings and move on to the problem solving process.
7. Positive reinforcement includes praise and encouragement for positive behavior or behavior change.
8. Modeling appropriate behavior for children.
9. Carrying out all discipline techniques in a calm, but firm manner that reassures the child that it is the behavior that is unacceptable and not the child.
10. Restraint may be used when reasonably necessary to prevent a child from harming him or herself or to prevent a child from harming other persons or property.

Please note: The staff at Children's Nook is prohibited from:

1. Hitting, shaking, biting, pinching, or inflicting any form of corporal punishment.
2. Restricting a child's movement by binding or tying him/her.
3. Inflicting mental or emotional punishment such as humiliating, shaming or threatening a child.
4. Depriving a child of meals, snacks, rest or necessary toilet use.
5. Confining a child in an enclosed area such as a closet or locked room.

Any employee that engages in any of the above activities will be immediately dismissed.

If your child is sent to the office more than three times in one day you will be called to pick up your child. Too much time out makes for a negative day. Parents should discuss the importance of following rules with their child(ren). If your child bites more than twice in one day you will be called to pick up your child. Your child may return the next day, but if she continues to bite his/her enrollment may be terminated.

XVII. State and Law Enforcement Regulations

We are mandated by the State of South Carolina and the Department of Children and Youth Services to report neglect and abuse. In addition, the Children's Nook is responsible for the safe keeping of each child and must deliver quality care. If the staff or the Director has reasonable doubt a parent, guardian or authorized person is not mentally or physically capable of taking custody of the child and delivering quality care, they will contact the proper authorities.

If we determine a parent, guardian, or authorized person is not mentally or physically capable of taking custody of the child, we will contact the following persons in the sequence:

1. Your spouse
2. Emergency persons listed on your child's Authorized Release Form
3. Police Department
4. Department of Children and Youth Services

XVIII. Complaint Procedure

If there is a problem within the Children's Nook, it needs to be identified, discussed, and resolved by those involved as soon as possible. This is necessary for the proper functioning and health of our program. The Children's Nook openly accepts constructive criticism; however, we will not tolerate disrespectful behavior toward any staff or administrative member.

Please use the following sequential procedure until the problem is resolved:

- 1st The staff member with whom the problem is associated
- 2nd The classroom teacher
- 3rd The Director

XIX. Enrollment Termination Policy

All children are accepted into the center on a trial basis for a period of one month with a provision for termination from the program with 2 weeks written notice. We do not believe a child should remain at the Children's Nook unless he/she derives some benefit from the program. After the trial period, the center reserves the right to dismiss a child from the center for the following reasons:

- 1) Consistent disruptive behavior by a child causing excessive classroom management problems for the staff.
- 2) Special developmental needs which the staff cannot adequately meet.
- 3) Lack of cooperation from the parents to support the following guidelines:
 - a) Habitual late pick-up of a child
 - b) Failure to follow the sick policy
 - c) Verbal, physical, or psychological abuse of staff, parents, or children by an adult associated with the child or the child itself.

XX. Curriculum

Because children range in age and ability levels, they learn in a multitude of different ways. Therefore, developing a comprehensive and inclusive early childhood curriculum is a challenging, but rewarding, task.

The curriculum implemented at the Children's Nook encompasses all aspects of the developmental domains (cognitive, emotional, physical and social) and include all subject areas. The Children's Nook curriculum is designed to target all 3 learning styles (auditory, kinesthetic and visual).

Thematic weeks of study are created and organized by the classroom teacher and approved by the Director. The weekly themes are designed to integrate all subject areas with the exploration of a broad subject such as *All About Me*, *Under the Sea*, *Transportation*, etc. To continue creating a developmentally appropriate environment children engage in active, hands-on, concrete experiences and ongoing interaction with appropriate materials, equipment, and people in the learning environment.

XXI. Field Trips

An important part of a young child's life is learning about the community he/she lives in and experiencing what it has to offer. Therefore, children are often taken on walks or trips away from the Children's Nook. You will be notified in advance of a field trip and a separate permission form will be sent home detailing the trip.

XXII. Before You Begin

We encourage you and your child to visit the Children's Nook at least once before your assigned starting date. This enables both parent and child to become acquainted with the staff, children, environment, and daily routine. Our objective is to help your family feel comfortable and secure in our childcare facility.

Prior to or on the first day of your child's attendance, please bring the following items:

- a) An updated record of immunizations.
- b) Fees: Tuition for the first week and last week (deposit) and the annual registration fee
- c) Registration forms filled out, signed, and dated.
- d) If your child does not receive hot lunch, you need to provide a nutritious lunch, including a beverage. Please note: If your child brings lunch we cannot heat it in the classrooms or kitchen or store it in the refrigerator. We encourage awareness of the nutritional value of lunches that are provided. Parents need to ensure that these lunches are in accordance with the age appropriate recommended daily allowance of nutrients for children. Nutritional snacks will be provided by the center in the morning and afternoon. Weekly snack menus are posted as well as a weekly hot lunch menu.
- e) An extra set of clothing, including underwear, socks, pants, shirt, and shoes. Please dress your child appropriately for the preschool environment and for the weather.
- f) Label all your child's belongings with the child's name. The Children's Nook is not responsible for lost, stolen, or damaged items.
- g) Items for naptime include a small sheet and blanket. All items must be labeled and put in a diaper/book bag. Bedding is sent home each Friday to be laundered and returned on the following Monday.
- h) Please do not send toys from home as they may be lost or broken. Books or tapes a child wishes to share with the class should be marked with the child's name and given to the caregiver. If your child's class has a *show-and-tell* day, you will be notified.
- i) If your child is wearing diapers, you are required to provide disposable diapers and baby wipes.
- j) All bottles must be prepared at home. All jar food must be in its original container and unopened.
- k) If your child uses a sippy cup, you are required to provide 3 cups each day, which will be sent home daily for cleaning.

Any additional information will be provided by your child's classroom teacher.