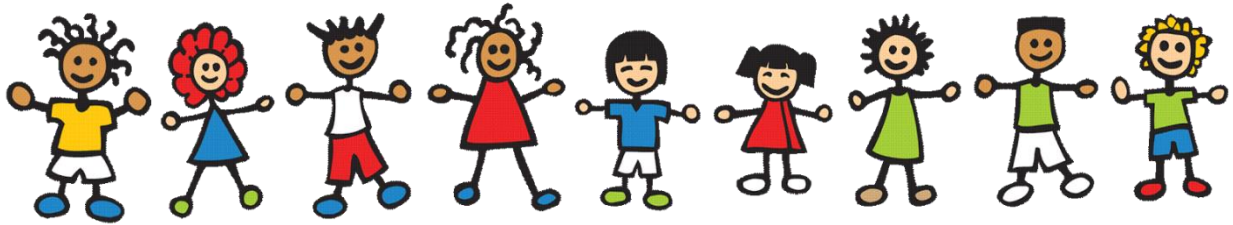


## STEP BY STEP LEARNING CENTER



*Where Fun and Learning go Hand in Hand*

*Parents and Guardians:*

*As we know, Flu season is quickly approaching and COVID-19, Monkeypox, and Hand, Foot and Mouth Disease are still part of our lives. It is our duty as a community to do what we can to limit the spread of these illnesses along with the common cold/flu.*

*Precautions are being taken to ensure that our childcare is disinfected and clean. Your support is needed. Please, Please, Please, **if your child or anyone in your home is exhibiting any of the following symptoms: Unexplained rash, severe and consistent coughing, thick/continuous runny nose, fever, or shortness of breath – Please keep them home.** This is for the safety of everyone. If your child develops any of these symptoms while in childcare, they will need to be picked up immediately. It is very important to protect and prevent any other children in our care for becoming sick.*

*Also, for our current school-aged children, if there is a Covid or Monkeypox outbreak in school, children are to be picked up by parents. A negative test result will be needed in order for your child to return to childcare.*

*Everyone is encouraged to continue frequent hand washing, use hand sanitizer, avoid touching your eyes, mouth, and nose, and disinfect frequently. If there are any updates from the Maryland State Department of Education (MDSE), I will make sure that you are updated.*

*Special Note: COVID-19/Monkeypox is treated as any other flu or sickness and all daycare fees must be paid on schedule even if the child is out sick. By signing this disclosure that you are aware of all concerns around the COVID-19/Monkeypox and dropping your child off at childcare.*

Parent Signature \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_

Provider Signature \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_

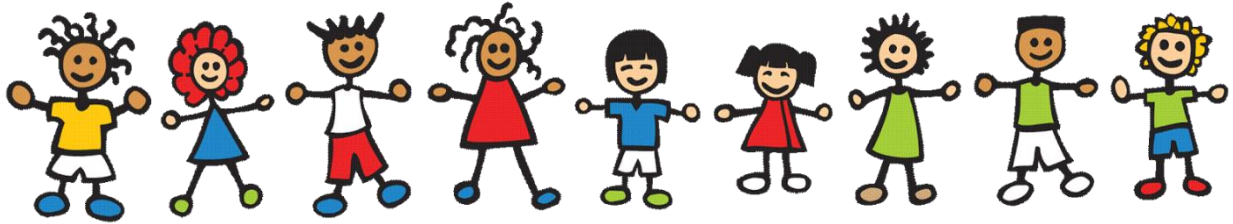
*STEP BY STEP FAMILY LEARNING CENTER*



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# ***POLICY AND PROCEDURES***

## STEP BY STEP FAMILY LEARNING CENTER



*Where Fun and Learning go Hand in Hand*

### *Policy and Procedure*

*Policy and Procedures are to provide children with a safe, clean, and fun environment where they can play, discover, and grow with guidance and care. The policies will be kept current and made available to parents. It is used to govern over daily operations of the family childcare along with the rules and regulations. These policies become effective upon acceptance by the parent/guardian and the Provider.*

## *Philosophy*

*We believe that each child is an individual and as educators we will value and develop each child's strengths, interests, skills, abilities and knowledge to extend their learning. We believe that children learn through play so they will be provided opportunities to explore, discover, create and imagine.*

*We believe that every child has an equal value to this program and actively work to support full inclusion of children with diverse abilities, as well as those from all socio-economic, ethnic, and religious backgrounds. Cultural competence will always be embraced with a highlight on special knowledge about individuals and groups of children and incorporating this knowledge into standards, policies and practices. Some examples of this include:*

- Structuring activities to help children work effectively cross-culturally and value diversity (language time; everyone learns phrases from the languages of others - food preparation; having weekly snacks/meals that are closely associated with various cultures),*
- Being committed to manage the "dynamics of difference",*
- Conducting self-assessments to ensure cultural characteristics (In some cultures, looking down or away when being spoken to is a sign of respect. This culture-specific respectful behavior can easily be mistaken as a show of defiance if not understood in a culturally competent context).*

*We believe in cultural diversity. I will celebrate the benefits of diversity with each individual child and enable them to understand and acknowledge differences.*

*We believe young children are very concerned about themselves and the small world they live in: family and home. However, each child is unique with different interests, backgrounds, and developmental stages.*

*We believe the environment plays a major role in the success of an early childhood program. It should enhance the children's interests in all developmental domains. We believe learning in an early childhood environment is done most successfully through stations that can be visited, explored, and revisited again and again. The environment should take into consideration the social skills, communication skills, physical abilities or challenges, and learning styles of the children being served.*

*The early years of a child's life are busy. We believe learning is happening all the time and is interwoven through all developmental domains, these include: physical, social/emotional cognitive and communication. Therefore, the goal of this program is to make this ongoing learning experience safe, positive, and fun, nurturing the*

*whole child as we strive to guide them into the next stage of development with confidence in themselves and an excitement for continued learning.*

### ***Ages Serviced***

*Age 6 weeks - Age 4 years.*

### ***Months of Operations***

*Step By Step Learning Center operates from January - December.*

### ***Days of Operation***

*Step by Step Learning Center will conduct services Monday - Friday*

### ***Hours of Operation***

*Step by Step Learning Center will be open for care from 7am - 4:30pm. Children will need to be present no later than 10am.*

### ***Holiday Observances***

*Step by Step Learning Center will be closed for the following Holidays: (Paid Holidays), New Years Day, MLK Day, Good Friday, Easter Monday, Memorial Day, Juneteenth, Independence Day, Labor Day, Thanksgiving Day and Friday after, Christmas Day).*

*This year 2024' Childcare will be closed for 1 week for the Christmas/New Year Holiday (December 25, 2024 - January 1, 2025), December 24, 2024 will be a half-day, we will be closing at 12pm.*

### ***Admission Requirements***

*All necessary enrollment forms must be completed and returned prior to admission.*

- *Emergency Form*
- *Parent's Guide to Regulated Childcare*
- *Health Inventory*
- *Immunization Certificate*
- *Enrollment Form*
- \* *Contract*
- \* *Transportation Permission Agreement*
- \* *Financial Agreement*
- \* *Meal Benefit Application*

### ***Two-Week Notices***

*A paid trial period of 2-weeks is agreed upon as a condition of placement. After that period, a 2-week written notice is required from the parent to terminate the childcare contract. If a 2-week notice is not given to the provider, the parent will be responsible for the 2-weeks of payment.*

*Provider may cancel care at any time.*

### **Tuition/Enrollment**

*Registration Fee: \$100. Non-refundable deposit*

*All tuition payments and scholarship co-payments are due on Monday of each week for the duration of the contract by cash, cash app, money order, or through our Procure App - Personal checks are never accepted. No partial payments are accepted. If payments are not received by the due date, a late fee will be charged in the amount of \$15. per day. Multiple late fees will result in the termination of the childcare contract.*

### **Scholarships**

*Co-payments are in effect for the duration of the accepted scholarship. It is the parent's responsibility to ensure that scholarships are renewed when needed. If there are any lapses in scholarship renewals, it is the parent's responsibility to pay the standard weekly rate.*

### **Tardiness**

*Childcare closes for your child at our contractually agreed upon time. After that agreed upon time, there is a (\$20) charge for the first 10 minutes and (\$3.00) per minute late fee after the first 10 minutes. Please be advised that your call to inform of lateness, although appreciated, does not waive your late fee. Perpetual lateness **WILL** result in termination of the childcare contract.*

### **Transportation**

*A transportation permission agreement must be signed for routine transportation such as field trips. Most transportation will happen by foot (or stroller); In rare cases, children will be transported by motor vehicle.*

*Step by Step Learning Center reserves the right to cancel transportation if deemed necessary (poor weather, unsafe conditions). The safety of every child being transported is taken very seriously and I will take every measure possible to ensure the safety of your child.*

### **Nutrition Policy**

*Good Nutrition is vital to children's physical and mental development. This program participates with the CACFP program through the State of Maryland and follows all childcare nutrition guideline for all meals and snacks (fats, sugar, and salt are limited).*

*A variety of nutritious meals are prepared on site daily and each child is encouraged to try different foods, but will not be forced to eat. At times, a special diet may be required due to food sensitivities or allergies. I am experienced in accommodating special diets, without compromising nutrition. If your child requires a special diet, reasonable adjustments will be made. If you prefer to send meals, you must follow USDA nutrition guidelines which will be supplied to you. Meals provided from home will be monitored to ensure that they meet USDA guidelines.*

## **Redirection Policy**

Step by Step Learning Center guarantees that no child shall be spanked or subjected any other form of physical punishment. In addition, this Learning Center will not subject any child to discipline, which is severe, humiliating, frightening, or any kind of discipline associated with depriving a child of necessary nutrition, rest, and/or toileting.

This Learning Center uses discipline strategies to accomplish desirable behavior:

**Positive Reinforcement:** Focusing on things children are doing right, rather than on negative behaviors: “Good job using a soft touch!”

**Redirection:** Distracting the child’s attention from the undesired behavior with something else: “Let’s go play something else!”

**Proactive Approach:** Anticipating children’s actions before they happen. Intervention can quickly happen to stop a behavior from occurring {looking for warning signs that an action might be about to happen}. Strategically placing myself to intervene before an undesirable behavior occurs.

**Modeling:** Demonstrating appropriate behavior. Showing children how to act by example.

**Positive Phrasing:** Using positive rather than negative phrases: (“hands are for hugging”, rather than “do not hit”).

We teach the children to resolve their own disputes by taking advantage of opportunities that arise in which we can guide them to peaceful cooperation.

## **ACTION PLAN**

Physical Acts of Violence, Disobedience, Negative Comments/Speech

These behaviors are demonstrated by hitting, pushing, name calling, disrespectful behaviors, bullying, etc. Intervention will be immediate. After accessing the child that has been victimized to determine whether he or she needs any special attention (medical or otherwise). The aggressor will immediately be cautioned and directed to make amends (to apologize or share, for example). If an inappropriate behavior continues, the aggressor may be subjected to:

1. A time out; or
2. Being physically removed from the immediate vicinity of the incident; or
3. Being limited in partaking in the immediate activity or related future activities

If a dispute over a toy is the source of the incident, the toy may be temporarily removed. The parents of both children will be notified of the incident.

The safety and well-being of every child is the ultimate goal of any and all forms of discipline at Step by Step Learning Center.

**Biting is a cause for immediate termination of care.**

### **Materials**

Material used at Step by Step Learning Center are age-appropriate, age-accessible, and organized for independent and cooperative play. There is a variety of materials for child engagement, learning, and fun. The materials give your child options for free play, quiet play, active play, and supports children with differences in abilities, cultures, and languages. The materials also reflect the child's interests and come in a variety of shapes, sizes, and textures. All materials are disinfected daily.

### **Inclusion Policy**

Step by Step Learning Center is a safe and healthy environment that includes all children regardless of the gender, race, religion, culture, language, ability, or parent's sexual orientation/identity. As a professional, I will not allow discrimination of any kind against any of the children or families in my care.

### **Family Involvement**

Family Involvement is encouraged through a variety of activities. I invite your input as to ideas for special activities and field trips. You're are welcomed to send a "Friday Snack" for the Group (I will send out a sign-up sheet via text). And please send me your favorite kid-friendly recipe that your child can create together with their friends. If you have a favorite book, that you would like for me to read to the group, please send it!!

### **Conference Policy**

In the month of October, I will conduct parent conferences. I will send out a text message giving dates/time for you to choose from. Areas of discussion are as follows:

- Child's Social/Emotional Development
- Child's Cognitive Development
- Child's Progression
- Child's Behavior
- Attendance
- Child's Integration
- Next Steps/Transition

**If necessary, conferences can be held virtually**

### **Transition Plan**

There are times when both parent's and children become nervous, frightened, worried, or irritated. If it is a particularly rough morning, (did not sleep well, had a hard weekend, is not feeling well)– Please send me a quick text and let me know. If there are major changes in the demographics in your child's home



setting, please let me know. Quality assessments will be conducted twice per year in my program to ensure that I am meeting the needs of your child and your family.

If your child is having a hard time in the mornings, we can set a time after 4:30pm, where you and the child can come in for a short time to sit, chat, and have a snack. With positive interaction between the parent, provider, and child, transitions should happen more seamlessly. If your child needs reasonable accommodations to their daily routines until they are comfortable adjusting to doing things more independently, the routine will be practiced with your child until they are more comfortable.

## **Health and Safety**

### **Illness**

Children will not be accepted into Childcare with the following symptoms:

- Fever of 100 degree or more
- Rash, earache, severe cough
- Chills, headache plus (1) other symptom
- Runny nose with colored mucus
- Sore Throat
- \* Pink Eye
- \* Vomiting
- \* Diarrhea
- \* Ring Worm

If your child becomes sick while in Childcare, they will be isolated from other children and the parent will be notified immediately. The child must be picked up from Childcare within the hour. Sick children may return to Childcare once they have been symptom free (un-medicated) for 24 hours. This means the child must be symptom free for 24 hours without the aid of medication.

### **Emergency Medical Care**

In the event of an emergency with your child, parents will be called and if necessary, the child will be transported by ambulance to the nearest hospital.

### **Administration of Medication**

All children must have written consent prior to any prescription or over the counter medication being dispensed. A medication administration form must be completed each time your child needs medication administered. Prescription medication must be in the original prescription container which shows the child's name, medication name, doctors name, pharmacy name, prescription number, date, and administration instructions.

The medication must be given by the parent for the first 24 hours. Parents will be notified immediately of any adverse reactions to the medication.

### **Parent Notification**

Parents will be notified immediately (by phone) if a child becomes ill or is injured in Childcare (requiring medical attention). Please answer any and all calls from your Childcare. If your child gets a minor boo-boo, an ice-pack or bandage will be applied and a text message (with picture if appropriate) will be sent to the parent.

## **Emergency Plans**

**The following procedures will be followed for the circumstances listed below**

### **Fire/Flood/Tornado**

Remove the children from the Childcare with head count, go to designated safe place (Fire Department on Lafayette Avenue), conduct 2<sup>nd</sup> head count to ensure all children are safely out. Call the Fire Department (we will already be there). Call parents, call the Maryland State Department of Education – Office of Childcare within 24 hours.

### **Severe Weather**

Remain calm. Move children to interior room for safety. In the case of tornado, have the children place their heads between knees with the backs against the wall. Listen to the radio for weather updates. Contact parents.

### **Loss of Electrical Power**

Remain calm. Call BGE to report power loss. Try to make children as comfortable as possible (Use battery operated fans (on-site) or use blankets for warmth). Call parents – If power is out for more than 1 hour, parent will need to retrieve child from Childcare.

### **Loss of Water**

Bottled water will be used for drinking purposes. Call Baltimore City regarding water outage. Call plumber if appropriate. If water is off for more than 1 hour, parent will need to retrieve child from Childcare

### **Serious Injury to a Child**

Call 911. Call the parent to report the injury. Keep the child calm and comfortable until medical services arrive. Report the injury to the Maryland State Department of Education – Office of Childcare within 24 hours.

### **Breastfeeding**

Breastfeeding has been proven to be the best form of infant nutrition, providing multitude of health benefits for both the infant and the mother. Mother's will be able to breastfeed on site.

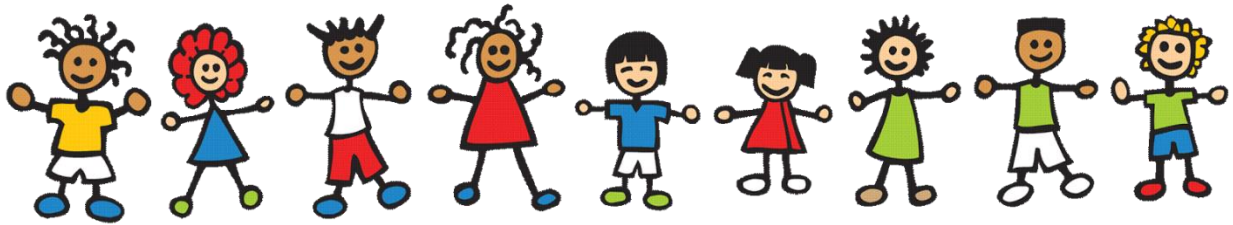
### **Parent/Guardians**

Parent/Guardians are required to provide and maintain a complete, up-to-date file, notify provider of any changes (address, phone number, behavior, eating habits, authorized pick-ups persons, illnesses, appointments). Parent/Guardians are required to provide and maintain a complete change of seasonal clothing (socks, undershirts, shorts, sweaters, etc.) Parent/Guardians must provide diaper/pull-ups. Wipes, blankets and sheets. Parent/Guardians must adhere to policies, schedules, and notices.

## Notice of Existence of Firearm

Notice of existence of a firearm in Childcare will be communicated to the parent. Firearm shall be stored so that they are not accessible to children.

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## Pets

Notification of existence of any pets inside the Childcare or on the outside property will be given to parent. Pets must be breed certified, and vaccinated in accordance with the requirements of local authorities. Pets will not be permitted in the Childcare area when children are present. Proof of vaccination must be filed on the premises.

## Prohibited Substances

This is a smoke-free/drug-free environment. No person (provider, parent, or authorized pick-up), may use tobacco or any drugs within the front or back gates of the premises. This is cause for **immediate termination**.

## Infant Sleep Position Practices

- Based on the risk factors of Sudden Infant Death Syndrome (SIDS), all infants will be placed to sleep on their backs.
- All infants will be placed to sleep on a firm, tight-fitting mattress in a sturdy and safe crib with no pillows, quilts, blankets, comforters, bumper pads, stuffed toys, or other soft items.
- The infant sleeping area will be maintained within a temperature range of 68 degrees to 72 degrees depending upon the season.
- When an infant can easily and continuously roll to their stomachs, they will be allowed to sleep in that position if they are 6 months old or above.
- Positioning devices that restrict an infant's movements in cribs **will not** be used unless a physician's written statement authorizing its use is provided for that particular infant.

## **Inclement Weather**

Step by Step Learning Center MAY be CLOSED with pay, when Baltimore City schools are closed due to inclement weather (snow, hurricane, hail, sleet, freezing rain, tornado etc.) For liability reasons, I must allow the building to clear sidewalks and the parking lot prior to opening. If Childcare is going to be closed, delayed, or is closing early due to severe weather, I will let you know as soon as possible through our Procure App.

## **Required Reporting/State Law**

Under Maryland law, I am a mandated reporter and must report suspected abuse, neglect, or deprivation of a child. This means that the law requires that I contact Child Protected Services if I suspect or see abuse, neglect, or deprivation.

## **Exceptional Needs Policy**

This Childcare program provides public accommodations and therefore must comply with the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA). I am committed to meeting the needs of all children, regardless of abilities. As the number of children with chronic health conditions such as asthma, allergies, and diabetes increase, as well as the number of children with varying emotional needs, the ability of this program to plan for and include all children is critical.

Inclusion of children with exceptional needs has been shown to enrich the childcare experience for the provider, families, and enrolled children.

## **Procedures and Practices, including responsible person(s)**

- Children with exceptional needs may be accepted into this program under the guidelines of the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA).
- All families will be treated with dignity and respect and appreciated for their individual differences.
- Step by Step Learning Center will be responsible for ensuring confidentiality of all exceptional needs.
- The individual written plan of care for children with exceptional needs will be followed in all emergency situations and shall be updated annually.

## **When this policy applies:**

At all time.

## **Communication plan for parents**

Staff, volunteers, and parents will receive a digital copy of this policy. New digital copies will be sent when updates are made.

