

Parent Handbook

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SC DSS License #23691

Mission Statement

Our mission is to provide quality childcare for working families in our community while meeting the needs of the children that we serve. We aim to provide an exemplary, trusting environment where children can grow, learn, and be prepared for school readiness.

**Policies & Procedures**

The following is a list of policies and procedures for Growing Minds Learning Center. These policies and procedures are provided for the benefit of all concerned, and to aid in better understanding and communication between you the parent, and your child’s care giver. Most important, they will help protect your child, and give them a more secure feeling, and minimize their fears while away from you. It is our goal to provide a warm loving environment. All children must be signed in and out each day.

Child Care Admission Policy: All child care available requires an interview with the parents or guardians. The child/children must be present at the interview. All child care forms returned within seven days of enrollment. However, child’s immunizations must be submitted before or on the date that the child enrolls. Child will not be allowed in daycare until the immunization record is submitted. You will be asked to return home or to your doctor and get the record.

Trial Period: To assure that the child care arrangements are a good match for the child and the provider there will be a two-week trial period. Within this period either the family or the provider may terminate child care for any reason without notice. If the arrangements don’t seem to match for your family, we will help you in any way we can to help you find care that meets your family’s needs.

Full Time Care: Full time care is considered 3 or more days a week for more than 4 hours per day. Children are to be dropped off and picked up within their individually contracted times each day.

Part Time Care: Part time care is considered 2 days a week with a minimum of 8 hours per day

Drop-In Care: Child care available to families not under current contract. Hours are as needed pending availability. Twenty-four-hour notice required to check for availability. Admission policy requirements still apply.

Fees:

Registration Fee due at enrollment and annually $100.00 per child

Full Time rates up to 30 hours/week/child

$170.00 per week Infants-2 years and older

$160.00 three-years old

$150.00 per week 4 years of age

$75 per week for children who need after school care ages 5-12

Absence: Parents promise to notify Growing Minds ASAP!! Even if it is the night before and you know your child is sick and might be the next day. Too much communication is okay!! (PLEASE keep in mind that our illness policy is very strict about not accepting sick children. If you mask the symptoms with medication and send your child to daycare your contract will be terminated.) The parent is responsible for payment of contracted time regardless if the child attends or not

Alternate Care: Alternate care is the responsibility of the parents when the contracted child care center is closed for notified holidays, continuing education. It is very important to find alternate care before it is needed.

Substitute Care: Substitute child care is the responsibility of the provider on a regularly scheduled contracted child care day. You will be notified. We encourage a few visitors from time to time so the young toddlers learn not to be so fearful. We carefully screen all who will be

visiting. On occasion one of the local pastors will join us for activities with the children.

Tuition Policy and Fees: All child care tuition and fees are to be paid in advance. Tuition can be paid by personal check from a local bank. Out of state checks will not be accepted. This schedule will be part of each individual contract. Payment is always due in advance on their first day of your contracted day. There will be a $5.00 per day late fee for any payment received after date due unless arrangement made with center. The late fee may be waived if a child is unexpectedly ill and not able to attend child care. If a child is going on vacation, tuition will be due the week after vacation. The director will go over this with you on your financial agreement policy. Contract renewal: Contracts will be renewed annually. Returned Checks: There will be a $35.00 cash fee for any returned check, plus the check amount in cash. Parents will be charged for all fees incurred by provider as the result of the returned check. Parents will be placed on a cash only basis once this situation arises.

\*\*\*\*\*\* PLEASE UNDERSTAND that you are responsible for your child’s tuition whether they attend or not. As long as we are open, fees are expected. You pay for your child’s spot not their attendance.

Overtime: Overtime fees will be applied as follows: any child in the center more than 10 hours per day will have an additional charge.

What do my fees pay for?

What you pay will buy quality childcare, nutritious meals and a nurturing environment for your child. Your fees pay for training, food, toys, equipment, supplies and all of the other things that your child will use.

Drop off: All children need to be dropped off at their individually contracted times. ABSOLUTLY NO DROP OFFS DURING NAP TIME!!!

Pick up: Children will be picked up before the daycare is closed. If they are not, all appropriate individuals will be notified. A fee of $1 per minute will be added to your bill and this must be paid before your child can attend daycare again. If a parent should arrive intoxicated, we will only release the child to people on the pickup list, or we will contact someone from the list. We will not release a child to a person who is not previously authorized while that parent is under the influence. If in the future the parent would like to add someone to the pickup list, I will need it ahead of time. If this should happen a conference with myself and the parents (both) will be in order before returning to this program.

Holidays: Growing Minds Learning Center will be closed on all provider observed legal and religious holidays. Parents will receive a holiday calendar for the planning of alternate care. Parents are responsible for alternate care on all observed legal and religious holidays. No reduction in fees will be made on these days these are paid holidays.

Second Hand Smoke: Growing Minds Learning Center is a Non-smoking facility. Please be sure to put your cigarettes out before entering the premises, including playground area.

Sick care, Antibiotics, and Medications: **We are very strict about bringing sick children into the daycare center.** All medications will be stored administered and recorded, and disposed of in compliance with the state department approved medication administration course.

Prescriptions: Please refer to the prescription medication release form.

Immunizations: Children may not return to the child care for at least twelve (12) hours after receiving immunizations or boosters. Parents are responsible for supplying provider with a written statement from the doctor regarding current immunization records. \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ Children who are not immunized are not allowed in this program. If an outbreak of an immunized infection occurs that child cannot come to daycare. If you child has a virus causing vomiting or diarrhea, we, reserve the right to deny care for 24 until virus is cleared out of your child’s system.

Food:

Breakfast will be offered to any child that wants it. We realize we all have different schedules and some mornings are more hectic than others. Breakfast starts at 8:00-8:15am, if your child arrives between those times, they will be offered breakfast. If they come after that time they will be expected to have been fed already.

Lunch will be offered to everyone starting around 11:00. Some children eat at different times especially toddlers who don’t understand. Lunch can start at 11:00 and will be offered until 11:30pm. Times may vary depending on the daily activities, and the demands of the children. If you are worried you will miss lunch please call and check. Otherwise, you will be expected to have your child fed if you are dropping them off. Remember not under any circumstances are there to be drop offs if children are sleeping. Afternoon snack is for whoever is hungry after getting up from their afternoon rest. We will be giving your child a well-balanced, healthy diet, and request that you send no extra snacks, unless arrangements have been make for a special event or birthday party. Menus are given upon request or are posted on the bulletin board. Candy and gum are NOT allowed at Growing Minds. Your child will never be forced to eat, if they don’t like what is on the menu, they aren’t that hungry, and can wait until the next meal or snack. If your child requires a special diet the parents will have to provide it. Also please be sure you have a cooler because our refrigerator can’t always fit a lunch box. Neither SIPPIES OR BOTTLES ARE ALLOWED TO BE CARRIED AROUND THE DAYCARE.

**Inclement Weather**

Inclement Weather in the event of inclement weather it will be the responsibility of the parent to please tune in to WSPA News 7 or the local radio station. We will follow the schedule for Spartanburg County School district 6. In the event of hazardous weather conditions, we reserve the right to close for the safety of the children and our staff.

Holidays

The center will be closed on the following holidays:

New Year’s Day (January 1)

Martin Luther King Jr. Day

Good Friday

Memorial Day

Independence Day (July 4-5)

Labor Day

Thanksgiving Day ( day before and after)

Christmas (The Day Before and After)

**Program Evaluation**

In an effort to continue to provide quality early childcare and education to the children in our facility we invite the parents and staff of our center to evaluate our center’s professionalism, program structure and administration as well as our director.

Staff Program Evaluation

Annually staff is given opportunity to evaluate program

Annually staff is given opportunity to evaluate the director

Annually staff is given opportunity to evaluate program structure

Annually staff is given opportunity to evaluate program curriculum

***During evaluations***

* Staff is evaluated and given opportunity to see where improvement is needed
* Staff is allowed to discuss their weakness and those of the director along with strengths
* Staff will verify they were evaluated after the first 30 days of hire and during yearly evaluation.
* Staff will be asked to write a Professional Development Plan
* Staff after first 30 days evaluate the hiring process
* Staff evaluate the onboarding and training process
* Staff will rate the curriculum

Parent Program Evaluation

Parents will be given an opportunity at any time during the year to evaluate the program.

On evaluation form parents’ rate:

* Staff professionalism
* Professionalism of director
* Program structure
* Cleanliness of the center
* The Center’s curriculum
* Opportunities for parent involvement
* Adequate resources and supports accessible
* School preparedness
* Staff communication

**Program Administration Scale**

In an effort on the part of the program director the use of the book Program Administration Scale Measuring Early Childhood Second Edition Leadership and Management is used. The director of Growing Minds uses the Worksheets and forms provided in the workbook to qualify staff using the PAS Scale profile form for the following:

* Human Resource Development

Staff Orientation

\*Orientation includes feedback for the supervisor during the introductory or probationary period

\*The written orientation procedures are reviewed annually

\*Written feedback is obtained from newly hired staff at eh conclusion of the probationary period

Supervision and Performance appraisal

Staff Development

* Personnel cost Allocation

Benefits

Compensation

Staffing Patterns and Scheduling

* Center Operations

Facilities Management

Risk Management

Internal Communications

* Child Assessment

Screening and Identification of Special Needs

Assessment in support of learning

* Fiscal Management

Budget Planning

Accounting Practices

* Program Planning and Evaluation

Program Evaluation

Strategic Planning

* Family Partnerships

Family Communications

Family Support and Involvement

* Marketing and Public Relations

External Communications

* Technology

Technical Resources

Use of Technology

* Staff Qualifications

Administrator

Lead Teacher

Teacher

Assistant/Teacher’s Aide

Growing Minds works hard to provide quality care and early education to the families in our community. Annually we access or policies and procedures, plan and strategize to improve.

**Staffing pattern**

To meet ABC Quality programs ratios Growing Minds follows the recommended class to student ratios allowed by ABC and Quality Counts.

Ratio

Infant room 6weeks -12months 1:4

Toddler 1 room 12-24 months 1:5

Toddler 2 room 24 -36 months 1:7

Preschool room 1:11

4K classroom 1:10

Each day teachers are given 30 minutes of paid planning time before or after their shift. Each day teachers at Growing Minds may clock in and work away from any children, without any disturbance to focus on planning. If they chose, they can work on lessons after their scheduled time with the children. This is solely to work on lessons and plan activities for the next day if they would like.

**Transition Policy**

As educators, the teaching staff here at Growing Minds Learning Center LLC understands the importance of placing children in classrooms where students can learn and thrive. We are also aware that our parents desire their children to be placed in environments that is academically challenging, and developmentally appropriate. Because of this we have thought through how children should transition from one class to the next. Many believe children should progress to the next level based upon turning a year older on their birthday, however this is not our methodology.

Growing Minds will utilize the same age progression process used by our local school district to transition children to the next age group. Children must remain in their classroom regardless of a birthday until the following August. Each child who has a birth after September 1 must remain in the class that reflects their age at entry. When creating our lesson plans, we make modifications and accommodations as needed for children who may need special help. We also individualize our plans to insure children are being instructed based upon ability, and development, while keeping in mind an age-appropriate environment is critical for success.

Internal Transition

When the child is going from one class to the next the current teacher will:

\* Have a conference with the parent to discuss the child’s transition to the next age level.

\* Parents are given an opportunity to discuss any concerns they may have and ask questions.

\* The teacher will discuss the child’s progress and show evidence of the child’s ability to move to the next class through work the child has done in the classroom.

\* A work portfolio utilizing pictures, art, pictures of the child in centers ect….will serve as evidence of learning.

\*This move will only take place once in a school year provided the child is ready for the transition.

**If is transition is agreed upon, the previous teacher will:**

\* Give the new teacher their classroom schedule with the teacher’s name and contact info along with a sample of the lesson plan.

\* Allow Child to spend 1-2 weeks visiting the new classroom a few hours per day.

\* Allow child to get acclimated to the new environment before full time attendance is allowed.

\*If the child isn’t ready additional time will be given for adjustment and another meeting may be needed to discuss waiting until a much later time for transition to take place.

\*Not being ready for transition is not a poor reflection upon the parent neither is the child judged.

External Transition to 5K

\*Public school will be contacted

\*Public school will give center a prepared for school readiness list for the parent

\*To prepare children for the transition director will get a new school schedule

\* Teacher will get a copy of a sample of the lesson plan for the parent

\* Teacher will find out which vehicle is used for parent/ teacher communication at the new school

\* Teacher will also ask what the teacher’s expectation is

\* Information about the public school will be given during open house

\* To learn about each child in our center and their home culture and environment, we use the All About Me form.

\* It is also a part of the external transition process to encourage the parent to visit the new school prior to open house if possible

External Transition Into GMLC

Attending a learning program for the First time can be extremely intimidating for a young child. Many children are attached to their parents and need somewhere safe that they can form another attachment. Children cannot be rushed into a facility without time to adjust. For this reason, we have considered procedures that are most beneficial to the health and mental wellbeing of the child when entering the program.

Entry Procedures

* All families will complete DSS regulation paperwork and provide immunization records before entry or written documentation notarized from physician family does not immunize for religious reasons
* Parents will have orientation with director to go over policies and procedures
* Parents will sign parent orientation form

* Parents will be given a handbook
* Parents will have opportunity to ask questions and voice and concerns they may have
* Parents will meet the child’s teacher and conference with them before entry
* Teacher will get the child’s home culture information from parent/guardian to better serve child during conference.
* Child and parent will tour the facility and meet all the teachers
* On the first week child will attend a few hours per day to get to know his/her new teacher
* On the first week the child will be allowed time to get to know classmates
* Child will be allowed 5 days entry if needed, but only 5 hours max
* If the child is still slow to warm; additional half time days will be given until ready

**Childcare Ratios**

Children 0-12months will be placed in the infant or EHS room

Children 12months -24 months will be placed in the 1year old room

Children 24-36 months will be placed in the 2year old room

Children 36-48 months will be placed in the preschool room

Any child entering the First Steps 4K classroom must be 4 by or before September 1

**Inclusion Policy**

*Family Centered Practices*

Growing Minds acknowledges and respects the priorities each family has for their child. Families are encouraged and supported to collaborate with staff to ensure that each child has an opportunity for optimum success. Growing Mind will communicate with each family daily and schedule regular meeting to discuss the child’s success and challenges.

*Professional Development for Staff*

**Staff Evaluation and Ongoing Professional Development**

**Overview**

In an effort to continue to quality and protect our children our ECP’S will be evaluated annually based upon supervision and observation of performance. The ECP’S will be evaluated on the following:

* Reliability/ attendance at work including early/on time/tardy arrivals.
* Preparation for children such as:

\* Lesson plans written and carried out

\* Room set up before children arrive

\* materials condition good repair and rotated regularly

* Quality of interaction with:

\* Children

\*Parents

\* Other Staff

* Willingness to accept constructive suggestions for improvement and to try new approaches.
* Use of best practices

* Maintenance of clean and organized room.
* Responsiveness of children to staff
* Adherence to center policies

**Staff Professional Development Plan**

During evaluations, the early childhood professional and the director will review previous written professional development plan. At this time, they will determine the success of the previous plan, goals and objectives. New objectives and goals will be included based upon the current evaluation. The professional development plan will cover such things as:

\*Professional development objectives including formal education, training, and courses that may help in areas of weakness based upon evaluation.

Level of education the staff would like to acquire or must acquire

Training required by DSS licensing/approval regulations and ABC Standard.

* Other training the center may require.
* Additional evaluation criteria (i.e. ‘on the job’ criteria).

\*Actions staff will take to achieve the objectives of the professional development plan, including timeframe.

* Actions or methods to achieve education may include TEACH, PITC, DSS, center of employee funded courses, and so forth.
* Methods to achieve training may include workshop and classes offered in the community, at conferences and so for the, Training may also be achieved though working with PITC, colleagues, team leaders, etc. in the center of employment.
* Actions to improve ‘on the job’ performance may include all those listed above and/or support from a mentor or supervisor.

**Nutrition Policy**

***Policy Statement***

Good nutrition is vital to children's overall development and wellbeing. In an effort to provide the best possible nutrition environment for the children in our facility, Growing Minds Learning Center has developed the following childcare nutrition policies to encourage the development of good eating habits that will last a lifetime**.**

***Child Care Nutrition***

Growing Minds Learning Center follows the child care nutrition guidelines recommended by the USDA, CACFP (Child an Adult Care Program) for all the foods we serve. We will provide a healthy and balanced diet that includes fruits, vegetables, and whole grains and limits foods and beverages that are high in sugar, and/or fat, our nutrition policy includes the following:

**Fruits and Vegetables**

* We serve at least 2 times a day
* We offer a vegetable other than white potatoes once a day

**Grains**

* We serve whole grain foods at least once per day.

**Beverages**

* We limit juice intake to once per day in a serving size specified for the child’s age group. When served, the juice is 100% fruit juice.
* We do not serve sugar sweetened beverages.
* We serve only skim or 1% milk to children age 2 and older.

**Fats and Sugars**

* High fat meats, such as bologna, bacon, and sausage, are served no more than two times per week.
* Fried or pre-fried vegetables, including potatoes, are served no more than once per week.
* We limit sweet food items to no more than two times per week.

**Role of staff in nutrition education**

* Staff provide opportunities for children to learn about nutrition 1 time per week or more.
* Staff act as role model for healthy eating in front of the children.

Meal and snack times are planned so that no child will go more than four hours without being offered food. We provide a variety of nutritionally based high quality foods each day so please do not send your child with outside food or drinks.

**Parent Nutrition Education**

*We will educate the parents about the children nutritional education and through emails, Brightwheel, handouts, flyers and handbooks.*

***Accommodations***

Outside foods will be allowed for children with special dietary requirements who have differing religious or cultural beliefs that prohibits the intake of certain foods.

Weekly Menus

Our weekly menus are carefully planned to follow childcare nutrition guidelines at every meal. Each menu is designed to provide a wide variety of nutritious foods that are different in color, shape, size and texture. All of our childcare menus include foods that are culturally diverse and seizures seasonally appropriate. We also like to introduce new and different foods and include children's favorite recipes in our menu planning menus are rotated on a weekly basis two provide children with a balance of variety and familiarity. Menus are adapted to incorporate local and fresh in season produce when available.

*Nutrition and Punishment*

Staff will never use food as a reward or as a punishment.

***Celebrations***

From birthday parties to Holidays there are many opportunities for celebrations in our childcare center. A birthday party will be held monthly in each classroom. If you would like to recognize your child's actual birthday, we request that you not send in treats or goodie bags but instead send a birthday book. For holiday decorations, a signup sheet with specific foods and beverages will be placed on the classroom door.

***Professional Development***

Annual nutrition training is required to ensure that all staff understand the important role nutrition plays and the overall well-being of children.

**My signature below indicates that I have received a copy of the nutrition policy, it has been reviewed with me and I have read and understand this policy.**

**Physical Health Policy Statement**

Growing Minds Learning Center recognizes the importance of physical activity for young children. Implementation of appropriate physical activity practices supports the health and development of children in care, as well as assisting in establishing positive lifestyle habits for the future.

***Physical Activity in Child Care***

The purpose of this policy is to ensure that children in care are supported and encouraged to engage in active play, develop fundamental movement skills and to have limited screen time. Our center

encourages all children to participate in a variety of daily physical activity opportunities that are

appropriate for their age, that are fun and that offer variety. In order to promote physical activity and provide all children with numerous opportunities for physical activity throughout the day

Growing Minds Learning Center will:

Daily Outdoor Play

\* Encourage a least restrictive, safe environment for infants and toddlers at all times.

\* Provide a designated safe outdoor area for infants (ages 0-12 months) for daily outdoor

play.

\* Provide toddlers (ages 1 through 2-year-olds) with at least 60-90 minutes of daily outdoor

active play opportunities across 2 or 3 separate occasions.

\* Provide preschoolers and school age children (ages 3 through 12-year-olds) with at least

90-120 minutes of daily outdoor active play opportunities across 2 or 3

occasions.

\*Increase indoor active play time so the total amount of active play time remains the same,

if weather limits outdoor time.

\*Provide a variety of play materials (both indoors and outdoors) that promote physical

Activity

***Role of Staff in Physical Activity***

\* Will encourage children to be physically active indoors and outdoors at appropriate times.

\* Will provide 5-10 minutes of planned physical activities at least 2 times daily for children

age 3 and older.

Screen Time Limitations

\* Not permit screen time (e.g., television, movies, video games and computers) for infants

and children two years and younger.

***Physical Activity and Punishment***

Staff members do not withhold opportunities for physical activity (e.g., not being permitted to play

with the rest of the class or being kept from play time), except when a child’s behavior is

dangerous to himself or others. Staff members never use physical activity or exercise as

punishment, e.g., doing push-ups or running laps. Play time or other opportunities for physical

activity is not withheld to enforce the completion of learning activities or academic work.

Our center uses appropriate alternate strategies as consequences for negative or undesirable

behaviors.

***Appropriate Dress for Physical Activity***

At Growing Minds Learning Center we have a Ready to Play Policy! Please bring your child

ready to play and have fun each day. Your child will participate in both indoor play and outdoor

play. Therefore, play clothes and shoes which can get dirty and allow for free and safe

movement is most appropriate. We expect parents to provide children with appropriate

clothing for safe and active outdoor play during all seasons.

For example: For safety, children cannot wear open-toe shoes, sandals or flip-flops. In winter,

provide a warm jacket, snowsuit, hat, mittens and boots. In spring and fall, provide a jacket or

sweater, and boots and rain jacket on rainy days. In summer, provide light clothing, swimsuit,

towel, hat and sunscreen. Please label all outer garments with your child’s name!

It is our expectation that children will go outside EVERYDAY! If you feel your child is too sick to go outside, then he/she is too sick to be at the childcare center. We request that you keep

him/her at home until they are well enough to go outside.

Professional Development

Annual training on promotion of children’s movement and physical activity is required for all staff.

My signature below indicates that I have received a copy of the physical activity policy, it has been reviewed

with me, and I have read and understand this policy.

**Mental Heath**

***Growing Minds Learning Center Discipline Policy***

**Policy Statement**

Praise and positive reinforcement are effective methods of behavior management of

children. When children receive positive, nonviolent, and understanding interactions

from adults and others, they develop good self-concepts, problem solving abilities, and

self-discipline. Based on this belief, Growing Minds Learning Center uses a positive

approach to discipline and practices the following discipline and behavior management

techniques.

WE DO

 Communicate to children using positive statements.

 Communicate with children on their level.

 Talk with children in a calm quiet manner.

 Explain unacceptable behavior to children.

 Give attention to children for positive behavior.

 Praise and encourage the children.

 Reason with and set limits for the children.

 Apply rules consistently.

 Model appropriate behavior.

 Set up the classroom environment to prevent problems.

 Provide alternatives and redirect children to acceptable activity.

 Give children opportunities to make choices and solve problems.

 Help children talk out problems and think of solutions.

 Listen to children and respect the children’s needs, desires, and feelings.

 Provide appropriate words to help solve conflicts.

 Use storybooks and discussion to work through common conflicts.

**WE DO NOT**

 Inflict corporal punishment in any manner upon a child. (Corporal punishment is

defined as the use of physical force to the body as a discipline measure. Physical

force to the body includes, but is not limited to, spanking, hitting, shaking, biting,

pinching, pushing, pulling, or slapping.)

 Use any strategy that hurts, shames, or belittles a child.

 Use any strategy that threatens, intimidates, or forces a child.

 Use food as a form of reward or punishment.

 Use or withhold physical activity as a punishment.

 Shame or punish a child if a bathroom accident occurs.

 Embarrass any child in front of others.

 Compare children.

 Place children in a locked and/or dark room.

 Leave any child alone, unattended or without supervision.

 Allow discipline of a child by other children.

 Criticize, make fun of, or otherwise belittle a child’s parents, families, or ethnic

groups.

Conferences will be scheduled with parents if continuous disciplinary problems occur. If a

child’s behavior consistently endangers the safety of the children around him/her, then

the Director has the right, after meeting with the parents and documenting behavior

problems and interventions, to terminate childcare services for that child.

*Note: If, at any point, there is an indication/suspicion that a child may have special*

*needs, Growing Minds Learning Center will inform the child’s family and make*

*contact with Baby Net/ Child Find for assessment and assistance.*

***Challenging Behaviors***

The staff of Growing Minds understands that we may encounter children who exhibit challenging behavior from time to time. When this occurs GMLC staff will utilize the tools and strategies obtained during Conscious Discipline Training. We will use evidence-based techniques to help children manage their emotions and coach them through their difficult moments. GMLC has a wealth of Conscious Discipline materials which include books, posters, CD’s, puppets, rugs, and signs to help children to be successful. If after utilizing and implementing the strategies of the evidence-based tool CD is unsuccessful; the staff will collaborate with the parents to discuss alternate methods of re-direction which also must be evidence-based and follow developmentally appropriate guidelines that lead to the practice of self-regulation.

**Inclusion Policy**

The Americans with Disabilities ACT (ADA) requires state and local governments, businesses, and non-profit organizations to provide goods services and programs to people with disabilities on an equal basis with the rest of the public. Therefore, Growing Minds Learning Center will not discriminate against any family regardless of their race, ethnicity, gender, culture, sexual preference, or disability.

**Policy Statement**

Growing Minds Learning Center welcomes all children and is committed to providing a developmentally appropriate early learning environment with experiences that support the full access and participation of every child in our facility. We believe each child has something beautiful they bring to the world. Therefore, we will aim to work in partnership with families and other professionals to provide the support needed to reach each child’s full potential.

**Procedures**

*Inclusive Environment*

Early Childhood educators here at Growing Minds use developmentally appropriate practices and consider the unique needs of all children when planning. Staff will make every attempt to make any adaptations or modifications needed to meet the needs of our students. Schedules, routines and activities are flexible and early educators will work with therapists, special educators and other professionals to integrated individual accommodations, modifications and strategies into classroom routines and activities. Any adaptations will be reviewed with families and other professionals supporting the child.

*Confidentiality*

Confidentially applies to all verbal and written information about potential, enrolling, and previously enrolled children and their families. All staff will be briefed on the need for confidentiality and will be expected to fulfill their obligation to respect the protection of privacy. All written records and files will always be stored in a secure location with limited access to the director and the child’s teacher. No information will be released about a child and the parent/legal guardian during enrolment or transition to another program or school without first receiving the written permission of the parent/guardian This excludes the responsibility held by ECE as mandated reporters of suspected child abuse and neglect.

*Family Centered Practices*

Growing Minds acknowledges and respects the priorities each family has for their child. Families are encouraged and supported to collaborate with staff to ensure that each child has an opportunity for optimum success. Growing Mind will communicate with each family daily and schedule regular meeting to discuss the child’s success and challenges.

*Professional Development for Staff*

Training and supports are provided to ensure that all staff are properly equip. This increases confidence and as well as competence to meet the developmental and educational needs of all children. All staff has been

oriented on inclusion policies and attend training focused on effective inclusion and other disability topics whenever possible. The director provides additional support and resources as appropriate.

*Collaboration with Other Professionals*

Many children with disabilities are supported by a variety of trained professionals such as therapists, teachers, and others. Growing Minds welcomes those professionals and work with them to assure the success of children needing services. The provider is encouraged to provide services to the child in the context of the early childhood classroom environment and the child’s teacher and service provider work collaboratively to determine the best strategies to support the child in the group setting while also allowing individual activities with the special service provider. Growing Minds supports the teacher’s participation in the individualized Family Service Plan (IFSP) and Individualized Education Program (IEP) meetings. Therefore, staff is given planning time to work on documentation, plan activities, and conduct any necessary research to assist with child’s education, care and development. If the teacher needs to attend an Individualized Education Program (IEP) meeting at an outside facility, coverage is made available by the director and staff is allowed to attend these meetings to better serve the families.

**Medication Policy**

The administration of any prescriptions or over the counter medication to children at the Growing Minds Learning Center:

All medications—prescription and over-the-counter—must be documented on a Growing Minds Learning Center Medication form by a parent or guardian in order to be administered. GMLC must have a signed and dated statement from the prescribing physician giving specific information as to how the medication is to be administered.

Please bring all medications to Glowing Minds Learning Center in the original containers with labels and child protective caps and give to the staff in the office. The child’s first and last name should be on all medications. Medications will be kept in a locked cabinet in the office. Discontinued and expired medications shall not be used and shall be returned to the parent.

Staff must wash hands before giving medication and after applying a medical ointment or cream in which a break in the skin (ie. Sores, cuts, or scrapes) may be encountered.

For your child’s safety, if he/she needs an EPI pen or an emergency inhaler, we ask that you send in an extra EPI pen or emergency inhaler to Miracles to have on hand for the duration of time your child.

**Allergy Prevention:**

Families are expected to notify us regarding children’s food and environmental allergies. Families of children with diagnosed allergies are required to provide us with a letterdetailing the child’s symptoms, reactions, treatments, and care. A list of the children’s allergies will be posted in the main area and

kitchen. We are trained to familiarize ourselves and consult the list to avoid the potential of exposing children to substances to which they have known allergies.

In the rare case of a medication error (ie. Failure to administer a medication at the prescribed time, administering an incorrect dosage of medication or administering the wrong medication), the parent will be immediately notified and notified in writing of a medication error or a suspected adverse reaction to a medication. This error will also be recorded in the child’s record.

All Growing Minds Learning Center staff are trained in First Aid and CPR. If a child is involved in a minor accident while at Growing Minds Learning Center an Incident Report will be written and given to the parent. If a physician’s care is needed, parents will be contacted immediately and emergency procedures will be followed

**Emergency Medical Care Policy**

In case of a medical emergency, Growing Minds Learning Center will obtain the necessary emergency medical care for the child, including but not limited to transportation to an emergency room. The parent will be responsible for all costs and expenses incurred in connection with any medical care provided to the child, including the cost of transportation.

Emergency telephone numbers are posted at each telephone. Emergency evacuation plans are posted at each exit. Periodically, the children with staff will practice the evacuation plans.

In case of an emergency, Growing Minds Learning Center will first try to reach the parent. If the parent cannot be reached, Growing Minds Learning Center will then contact the child's emergency contact person(s) as listed in the Day Care Contract.

It is unavoidable that children will incur scratches and scrapes while playing. These minor injuries will be treated by Growing Minds Learning Center’s staff with an ice pack, bandage and documented. Growing Minds Learning Center will inform the parent of the minor injury and the treatment provided and documented.

A life-threatening medical emergency means that the student requires immediate medical intervention to stabilize and prevent the medical condition from getting worse. Examples include compound fractures (bones protruding from skin), severe cuts, internal bleeding, severe burning, difficulty breathing, heart problems, shock, severe allergic reactions to insect bites, poisonous plant contact, or animal bites, ingestion of chemicals/poisoning, and unconsciousness.

Emergency Medical Procedures will be conducted in the case of but not limited to: Loss of consciousness, Breathing difficulties, and Severe bleeding. Seizure. Neck or back injury. Possible broken bones, Shock.

In the case of a medical emergency in which emergency medical care and treatment is warranted, the following steps will be followed by Growing Minds Learning Center staff:

* Remain calm. Call 911 Emergency Medical Service for First Responders team to come to the Center and the parent/guardian will immediately be called after that.
* Parents of the child will be notified of the child’s symptoms and that medical personnel have been dispatched.
* If parents cannot be reached, the Glowing Minds Learning Center will attempt to reach the emergency contacts and then the physician listed.
* If CPR or First Aid is necessary, trained staff will administer treatment until the ambulance/ medical personnel have arrived.

* First Responders will assess and determine whether the child needs to be taken to the nearest hospital or the parents’ preferred hospital by ambulance.
* Emergency medical form information for the child will be taken with the child to the hospital or emergency room Emergency information for the child shall be taken with the child to the hospital or emergency location.
* A teacher will accompany the child to the hospital or emergency location and remain until a parent or guardian arrives.
* A qualified staff member will be assigned to the classroom until the regular teacher returns.
* Growing Minds Learning Center’s management and our staff will always accompany the injured or critically sick child via transport, triage, and hospitalization until an authorized family member or guardian arrives. Growing Minds Learning Center’s management will ensure that each classroom will maintain ratio, tracking, and supervision compliance.
* Growing Minds Learning Center’s management will report the incident to the DSS immediately.

**Emergency Preparedness Policy**

The Steps our program will take in the event the following occurs as a result of an emergency such as fire, a natural disaster, or other threatening situations that may pose a health or safety hazard:

Evacuation to Dollar General located at 1790 E. Blackstock Rd. The phone number is 864-641-6550.

Temporary closure…… Verbal voicemails and Digital messages will be sent via email and text to each parent and staff.

Relocation Dollar General located at 1790 E. Blackstock Rd. The phone number is 864-641-6550.

Shelter in place / Lockdown …. classrooms at Growing Minds Learning Center at 985 Old Georgia Rd. Moore SC 29369

The policy will also address the following:

Communication and reunification of children with families The Growing Minds Learning Center will text, call, and email each parent and staff member.

Continuity of operations …. The Emergency Incident has been completely and safely resolved. Growing Minds Learning Center will communicate to each parent and staff the remaining operating hours.

Growing Minds Learning Center’s management will contact ABC Quality at 1-800-876-2223 if the facility must evacuate or needs to relocate during an emergency (when safe to do so)

All staff and volunteers at Glowing Minds Learning Center will take Emergency preparedness training for monthly fire and active shooter drills.

Tornado and nuclear drills will be exercised annually.

Growing Minds Learning Center will document each type of drill. These must be kept on-site until reviewed.

**Child Abuse and Neglect Policy**

Growing Minds Learning Center will carry out its obligation to report all suspected cases of child abuse and/or neglect to the proper authorities.

Child care providers are mandated reporters and have the responsibility to protect those who cannot protect themselves. As a mandated reporter, caregiving staff are an important part of the system to protect children.

The Child Abuse and Neglect Law:

*“Child Abuse Prevention and Treatment Act (CAPTA), originally enacted in 1974 (Public Law 93-247) and reauthorized in 2010, is the largest body of legislation with regard to the fair, ethical, and* ***legal*** *treatment of children and is intended to keep them free from all forms of* ***abuse*** *including physical, sexual, emotional, and psychological”*

Information on types of abuse or neglect that staff may look for. Examples include but are not limited to:

Child has frequent injuries or “accidents,” unexplained burns, cuts, bites, fading bruises or other marks noticeable after an absence from school or the explanation does not match the injury.

Child is always watchful and “on alert,” as if waiting for something bad to happen. Injuries appear to have a pattern or resemble an item such as marks from a hand or belt.

Child shies away from touch, flinches at sudden movements, or seems afraid to go home. Child arrives each day very hungry, unclean (body or clothing) or perhaps is covered in bug bites, takes food to eat at home, etc. – things that would suggest the child is not receiving proper care at home.

The child may also share information with the staff regarding things that are happening in the home which places the child in danger, e.g., parents use illegal drugs or substances, or someone in the home is abusing them (physically or sexually)

When staff suspect a child may be neglected at home and when staff see other staff abuse or neglect children in the facility they must report to:

1) DSS Office of Child Protective and Preventive Services with The Office of Out of Home Abuse and Neglect (OHAN).

2) DSS/ABC Quality at 1-800-876-2223

Mandated Reporter Law Section 63-7-310 (https://www.scstatehouse.gov/code/t63c007.php)

All staff need to take mandated reporters training annually.

Glowing Minds Learning Center’s cooperation in allowing DSS staff to conduct any on-site investigation and/or obtain necessary documentation to include any video footage

Release of staff and children’s records as appropriate and upon request.

DSS has implemented a centralized phone number for all counties to report suspected cases, or this may be done online at the following link. Both can be reported 365 days per

year, 24 hours a day, 7 days a week at 1-888-227-3487 or https://dss.sc.gov/child-well-being/report-child-abuse-and-neglect/.

**Swimming Policy (not applicable)**

**Physical Activity /Outdoor Time Policy**

Outdoor play is not only an opportunity for learning in a different environment, but it also provides many health benefits. Outdoor play allows for physical activity that supports the maintenance of a healthy weight and better nighttime sleep and brief exposure of the skin to sunlight promotes the production of vitamin D that growing children require.

The Growing Minds Learning Center *recognizes* the importance of physical activity for young children. Implementation of appropriate physical activity practices supports the health and development of children in care, as well as assists in establishing positive lifestyle habits for the future.

*Physical Activity in Child Care*

The purpose of this policy is to ensure that children in care are supported and encouraged to engage in active play, develop fundamental movement skills, and to have limited screen time. Our center encourages all children to participate in a variety of daily physical activity opportunities that are appropriate for their age, that are fun and that offer variety. In order to promote physical activity and provide all children with numerous opportunities for physical activity throughout the day Unique Kids will:

*Daily Outdoor Play*

* Provide a designated safe outdoor area for infants (ages 0-12 months) for daily outdoor play.
* Provide toddlers (ages 1 through 2 years old) with at least 60-90 minutes of daily outdoor active play opportunities across 2 or 3 separate occasions.
* Provide preschoolers and school-age children (ages 3 through 12 years old) with at least 90-120 minutes of daily outdoor active play opportunities across 2 or 3 separate occasions.
* Increase indoor active playtime so the total amount of active playtime remains the same if the weather limits outdoor time.
* Provide a variety of play materials (both indoors and outdoors) that promote physical activity.

*Role of Staff in Physical Activity*

* Will encourage children to be physically active indoors and outdoors at appropriate times.
* Will provide 5-10 minutes of planned physical activities at least 2 times daily for children age 3 and older.

*Screen Time Limitations*

* Not permit screen time (e.g., television, movies, video games and computers) for infants and children two years and younger.

*Physical Activity and Punishment*

Staff members do not withhold opportunities for physical activity (e.g., not being permitted to play with the rest of the class or being kept from play time), except when a child’s behavior is dangerous to himself or others. Staff members never use physical activity or exercise as punishment, e.g., doing push-ups or running laps. Playtime or other opportunities for physical activity are never withheld to enforce the completion of learning activities or academic work. Our center uses appropriate alternate strategies as consequences for negative or undesirable behaviors.

**Parents Physical Education and Limit Screen time**

We will educate the parents about the children physical education and limit screentime through emails, handouts, flyers and handbooks.

***Appropriate Dress for Physical Activity***

We at *Growing Minds Learning Center h*as a Ready to Play Policy! Please bring your child ready to play and have fun each day. Your child will participate in both indoor play and outdoor play. Therefore, play clothes and shoes which can get dirty and allow for free and safe movement are most appropriate. We expect parents to provide children with appropriate clothing for safe and active outdoor play during all seasons.

For example: For safety, children cannot wear open-toe shoes, sandals, or flip-flops. In winter, provide a warm jacket, snowsuit, hat, mittens, and boots. In spring and fall, provide a jacket or sweater, boots, and a rain jacket on rainy days. In summer, provide light clothing, swimsuit, towel, hat, and sunscreen. Please label all outer garments with your child’s name!

It is our expectation that children will go outside EVERYDAY! If you feel your child is too sick to go outside, then he/she is too sick to be at the childcare center. We request that you keep him/her at home until they are well enough to go outside.

*Professional Development*

Annual training on the promotion of children’s movement and physical activity is required for all staff.

**Child Maltreatment Policy**

Child maltreatment includes all types of abuse and neglect of a child under the age of 18 by a parent, caregiver, or another person in a custodial role (e.g., clergy, coach, or teacher). There are four common types of abuse. They are sexual, physical, emotional, and neglect. When child neglect is suspected or if a staff member sees other staff members abuse or neglect a child, The Growing Minds Learning Center staff are mandated to report to DSS. DSS has a centralized phone number for all counties to report suspected child abuse 1.800.876.2223. All staff members at the Blessed Lil One’s abide strictly by the SC DSS License Rules and Regulations.

All the Staff at the Growing Minds Learning center attend at least 15 hours of DSS training yearly. These classes include nutrition, social and emotional development, physical development, child abuse and neglect, bloodborne pathogens, infant and child CPR and First Aid, child ratio, playground safety, children’s fine and gross motor skills, etc. Our goal is that your child is loved, feels safe and learns every day.

**Prevention and Control of Infectious Diseases Policy**

Attendance at a childcare facility may expose a child to an increased risk of acquiring infectious diseases. Many types of infectious germs may be contained in human waste (urine, feces) and bodily fluids (saliva, nasal discharge, tissue and injury discharges, eye discharges, blood, and vomit). Growing Minds Learning Center ensures that infectious diseases are prevented or minimized while children are in care.

a. Health observation of children daily.

b. Separation of children who show symptoms of a communicable disease or infestation, e.g. pinkeye, lice, mumps, flu, etc. Include where the child will be kept until the parents arrive/how ratios are met/contact of parents.

c. Exclusion or dismissal of children who are ill, and what types of illnesses should preclude parents from bringing the child to the program (e.g., fever, flu, pinkeye, strep, etc.).

Page 23

d. Hand washing by children to prevent the spread of germs, e.g., after using the restroom, before eating meals/snacks, after handling animals, etc.

e. Hand washing by staff: prior to preparing food; after contact with children while preparing food; after handling bodily fluids or after changing diapers or after applying medication/ointments where there is a break in the skin; after handling animals; after cleaning or handling the garbage.

f. Growing Minds Learning Center will contact parents through Brightwheel when children have been exposed to infectious diseases.

g. Growing Minds Learning Center requires copies of immunization records for children who are homeschooled unless the parent provides a statement of religious exemption.

Note: In SC, under the authority of the Department of Health and Environmental Control (DHEC), school districts are responsible for ensuring the verification of immunization records for children age 5 and up.

1. h. Cleaning/Disinfecting Schedule of the facility/areas where children are served daily.
2. i. All the Staff health must have the current health assessment and TB test.

**Handling, Storage, and Disposal of Hazardous Materials and Biological Contaminants Policy**

* 1. a Toxic substance must be stored out of the reach of children in a locked cabinet. Toxic substances or hazardous materials include but are not limited to: chemicals, cleaning products, disinfectant sprays, insecticides, and gasoline products.
  2. b Toxic substances must not be used while children are present.
  3. c. Flammable materials should be stored in a separate building or area away from high temperatures and ignition sources, inaccessible to children.

1. d. Toxic substances/hazards must be stored away from food and medication.

e. Poisonous plants must not be allowed in the center.

f. Chemicals used to control odors must not be allowed, e.g., mothballs, air fresheners, essential oils, and toilet/urinal deodorizer blocks.

g. Procedures when staff must come in contact with bodily fluids resulting from a child injury or illness. Include disposal of material that comes into contact with bodily fluids.

**Transportation Policy**

At the Growing Minds Learning Center the safety of your child is our priority; and we will make every effort to ensure your child will arrive to the facility safe on timely. All drivers have met South Carolina Department of Social Services Child Care Licensing Transportation requirement to ensure the safety.

Note: Personal vehicles are not allowed for transportation as the program must comply with Jacob’s Law (see History of Compliance 7.2.5.l)

The staff to child ratio meets all state requirements for each of the programs we provide.

By signing the child in to the Growing Minds Learning Center programs, you are giving Glowing Minds Learning Center permission to transport your child to/from camp property and on scheduled field trips.

Pre-Transportation



* The driver will conduct a complete daily pre-trip vehicle inspection and will report to the director about any maintenance issues.
* The driver will make sure they have up-to-date contact, written consent from the parent/guardian and Emergency information for each child he/she will be picking up and the emergency number for the children must be easily available.
* The driver will make sure they have a charged cell phone on the bus for communicating with families, schools, or 911. The driver will not use the phone while driving the bus. The driver will not make any personal calls.
* The driver will make sure all sharp, heavy or potentially dangerous objects will be removed from the bus.
* The driver will make sure any needed medication/equipment are available on the bus as required in a child’s individual health plan.
* The driver will make sure the first aid kit is fully stocked.
* The driver will check the fuel gauge and fuel up prior to picking up children.
* Written directions for every travel destination are included in the transportation file.

Emergency Plan

* In the case of a moving violation/accident with or without children, the driver will contact the police, the Director, and the insurance company. The Director will designate staff to notify the parents/guardians.
* In the case of a medical emergency, the driver will top the bus where it is safe to do so and Emergency Medical procedures will be carried out.

Rules and Guidelines When Transporting Children

* Children are always to remain seated while buses are in operation. In case of an emergency, they may comply with the driver’s directions to do so.
* Children are encouraged to talk amongst themselves; however, we do discourage loud and/or screaming voices.
* The driver will use positive reinforcement to maintain order. If there is a behavior concern or safety concern, the driver will pull over to remind children of behavior requirements, and the driver will relay the information back to the Director. This information may then be relayed to the parent/guardian if necessary.
* Glowing Minds Learning Center has the right to refuse transportation for your child with limited notice.

**Parental Access Policy**

Parents are welcome to visit the childcare facility at any time during which childcare is provided and participate or volunteer in any of the activities with approved state background checks. Communication between parents and the provider is important in maintaining high quality childcare. All comments and suggestions regarding services are welcome. Glowing Minds Learning Center’s **free** and full **access** must be granted to parents of children enrolled unless court order stipulates otherwise. The visit must not disrupt instructional activities or classroom routines.