



# Policies & Procedures Handbook For Families

Updated April 2024

\*These policies are subject to change at any time and will be updated on our website at that time. Policies will be otherwise revised annually.

Welcome to Tiny Town Early Learning Center! We are recognized in our community as a leading childcare center, with numerous recognitions by our peers, our Tiny Town family, and the state of Pennsylvania! Our program is unique and blended by the different needs of our students and their families while they work. We are glad you're part of our Tiny Town family!

## Mission

Tiny Town Early Learning Center provides a safe, developmentally appropriate, nurturing environment that promotes social, emotional, cognitive and physical growth, as well as a positive self-image and a love of learning. We are recognized as a leader in the community for providing a strong foundation for future academic success. Our mission at Tiny Town Early Learning Center is to provide the highest quality care possible to the families we serve. We are dedicated to having a safe, healthy, fun, and playful learning experience for children.

## Policy for Code of Ethics & Confidentiality

Our center follows the NAEYC code of ethical conduct. Tiny Town follows the NAEYC Code of Ethical Conduct. It is located in the back of the Policy and Procedure handbook, as well as the employee policy handbook. The code outlines our core values, and how our staff are expected to act and perform in this center, as well as their responsibilities to your children and the families we serve. The policy is located at the end of this handbook.

## Smoke Free Center/Weapon Free

Our entire facility is smoke free and vape free. No alcohol, firearms, knives or weapons of any kind are permitted on the premises.

## Drop Off/Pick Up Procedure

Upon arrival, please turn your car motor off and remove the keys. Vehicles should not idle in the parking lot. Children should not walk from the car to the door alone. Ring the bell at the door and a staff member will meet you at the door and walk your child into the classroom.

For safety, when you come to pick up your child, we ask that you turn your car motor off and remove your keys. Vehicles should not idle in the

parking lot. Ring the doorbell and a staff member will bring your child/children to you at the door.

If this is your first time picking up a child, or staff are not familiar with recognizing you as a new family, we will ask you to provide identification before we will release the child to you. We will not release a child to anyone who is not listed on your child's emergency contact for as a person whom the child may be released to. You will need to add or take off someone from the list in person, not by phone. You need to update your child's form anytime a pick-up/drop-off person is to be added or removed, or if there is a change in custody arrangements. We will not release any child to anyone who appears to be intoxicated or under the influence.

## **Policy regarding Hours of child care**

Our rates are quoted for 9 hours of care, or less per day. If your work longer shifts and are in need of more than 9 hours of care, there will be an additional cost.

## **Scheduling child care Policy**

Your child's schedule for the next week needs to be turned in no later than Friday of every week. We need to keep an adult child ratio at all times, there for we need to schedule for the appropriate amount of staff, at the times you need. If your schedule stays the same each week, you will not need to fill out a calendar. If your schedule varies each week, a calendar with your child's name on it will be in a folder located on the front desk. Please fill out your schedule for the next week no later than Friday. Make sure to put the drop off and pick up times of your child, not your work times.

No schedule changes can be made without approval from the director, not a staff member. If you have a change in your child's schedule, speak with the director, and we will let you know if we have enough staff to cover the times you need. If we do not have your full schedule by Noon on Friday of each week, we cannot guarantee that we will have space available for your child to attend.

## **Hand Washing Policy**

Our program follows consistent practices regarding hand washing. Staff members and children who are developmentally able to learn about personal hygiene are taught hand-washing procedures and are periodically monitored.

Hand washing is required by all staff, volunteers, and children when it would reduce the risk of transmission of infectious diseases to themselves and to others, as described in the next paragraph. Staff assist children with hand washing as needed to successfully complete the task. Children wash either independently or with staff assistance. Children and adults wash their hands upon arrival for the day; after diapering or using the toilet (use of wet wipes is acceptable for infants); after handling body fluids (e.g., blowing or wiping a nose, coughing on a hand, or touching any mucus, blood, or vomit); before meals and snacks, before preparing or serving food, and after handling any raw food that requires cooking (e.g., meat, eggs, poultry); after playing in water that is shared by two or more people; after handling pets and other animals or any materials such as sand, dirt, or surfaces that might be contaminated by contact with animals; and when moving from one group to another (e.g., visiting) when it involves contact with infants, toddlers, and twos. Adults also wash their hands before and after feeding a child, before and after administering medication, after assisting a child with toileting, and after handling garbage or cleaning.

## **Policy on Parent/Guardian Meetings and Child Assessments**

Daily, we keep anecdotal notes on each child's play, comments, dialogue etc. These notes along with artwork and writing samples are kept in their portfolio, and used when lesson planning. Your child's teachers will complete the assessments on your child. They are with your child every day, and are familiar with your child, as your child is familiar with them. Staff are required to take training on assessing and observing children. Certificates are on file. Three times a year we complete developmental screenings on each child. Work Sampling for preschoolers, Ounce for toddlers, Ages and Stages for all ages. You will be able to see and attain a copy of the screening once completed. These screenings and checklists aid us in developing an individualized lesson plan and to set goals for your child, as well as overall program development. When we meet to discuss your child's progress three times a year, we will also ask for the goals you have set for your child. These meetings will foster relationships between families, staff, and will address any concerns or questions you may have. We are here to give you support in any way that we can, regarding you and your child's needs at our center. A screening tool will be completed on each child within their first 45 days of enrollment, and then three more times each year. Families may request a meeting with the director/teacher sooner if a topic arises, they wish to discuss.

## **Policy Regarding Confidentiality**

Our center follows the NAEYC code of ethical conduct. We keep all information about the children we serve and their families confidential. Your

child's file will be kept locked in the office and confidential. Your child's information will be available only to teaching staff who have consent from a parent or legal guardian, the child's/parents or legal guardian, or regulatory authorities. It is imperative for the safety of your child, that we disclose to staff any information regarding custody issues with your child, that would require staff to let, or not let your child leave with one of their parents.

## **Policy That Demonstrates Engagement & Partnership with Families**

We encourage you to become involved in making educational goals and outcomes for your child. We will discuss these goals at our conferences. We encourage you to talk to staff and ask questions if you have a concern or are unsure of something. If at first it cannot be resolved with the classroom teacher, you will be referred to the director. Any engagement should be done in a respectful, positive manner.

At times we may ask for volunteers to read to your child's class or talk about a special talent/hobby or to talk about your profession that may be of interest to the children, you will need to schedule this with the director, and appropriate clearances will be required for anyone coming into the classroom for more than pick up or drop off time.

## **Policy Regarding community information or Social Services**

We will provide any community happenings information with families as soon as it is available to us. We will also post it on our "family center" board located in each classroom. If you are in need of information for referrals to the intermediate unit, we have them available in the office. Information will be distributed to families three times a year at a minimum regarding self help, insurance needs, assistance programs, etc. Families may ask at any time if they are in need of a specific contact/program.

## Closings or Delays

The Remind communications system is how we communicate update, important messages, closings, etc. with our families.

You can also refer refer to the television stations, radio affiliates or websites listed below for delay and closing information. You will see Tiny Town's name on the screen. Please sign up for Remind, and you will get emergency notifications, closings and delay information sent to your phone.

KDKA Channel 2 News - [www.kdka.com](http://www.kdka.com)  
WTAE Channel 4 News - [www.thepittsburghchannel.com](http://www.thepittsburghchannel.com)  
WPXI Channel 11 News - [www.wpxi.com](http://www.wpxi.com)

\*These channels also have radio affiliates if you do not have access to television or Internet.

## Meals and Snacks

Tiny Town is on the Adult and Child Food Program, (CACFP). There is no charge to families for any meals or snacks served at Tiny Town. Any known food allergies are to be disclosed to the center when signing your child up for care. Any allergies to food and/or special feeding needs, shall be posted in the room of the child, and in the kitchen where food is being prepared. Staff will document all feedings for these children on daily food log sheet, and send it home with the family. Depending upon the time your child arrives and leaves, we serve breakfast, two snacks and lunch. Breakfast is served until 8:00am.

## Medication Policy

We will only administer prescription medications. Prescription medications must be in the original packaging, with the label attached stating the name of the medication, child, prescribing doctor, and dosage amount. You will be required to fill out a medicine form giving us permission to administer the medication. No over the counter medicines will be given, accept diaper rash cream. No powders may be used a diaper rash cream. Any prescription medicine or diaper rash cream will need to have a medicine log completed by the parent before any medicine will be given.

Whenever possible, the first does of medication should be given at home to see if the child has any type or reaction. If your child is on a prescription

medication, they should not return to the center until they have been on the medicine for 24 hours. Medication will not be used beyond the date of expiration on the container or beyond any expiration of the instructions provided by the physician or other person legally permitted to prescribe medication. All medications including diaper rash creams must be kept in a locked container. No medications, creams, or chapstick should be kept in a child's bag or pocket.

Staff will not be permitted to apply sunblock to any child. You may want to apply the sunblock on your child before you leave the house.

All staff are trained in first aid and CPR with airway breathing, and therefore have been trained on how to administer an epi-pen, an inhaler, and a nebulizer for a breathing treatment.

Any child requiring an injection using a needle, or a special medical procedure, will have to be accompanied by a nurse/trained professional that will come into the classroom to administer the injection or medical procedure.

## Sick Policy

To GREATLY reduce the number of sick children and staff at this center, do NOT send your children if they are sick.

A contagious disease condition is any disease condition easily spread from person to person through direct contact. Examples of some of these illnesses are poison ivy, scabies, pink eye, impetigo, ringworm, and nausea, diarrhea and many more. If a child is suspected of having a contagious disease, or something that is unsafe to be in the classroom, such as an oozing wound, spraying cough, excessive running nose, your child should not attend and will need to be seen by a doctor and be treated for 24 hours before returning to school. Your child will be temporarily excluded from school until a doctor's excuse is received by the Director.

Your child should stay home until they are fever free and symptom free, without the use of medication such as Tylenol (fever reducer) for 24 hours! If your child is sent home ill, they may not return to school/childcare the next day, as they need to be symptom free for 24 hours. Depending on the nature of the illness, you may be asked to bring in a doctor's excuse clearing your child to return to school. Our goal is to keep our center as clean and healthy as possible to illuminate any chance for the spread of germs.

If your child is under-immunized, they must immediately be taken out of childcare if an outbreak of the vaccine preventable disease occurs.

In the event your child is diagnosed with Hand Foot and Mouth Disease, your child will need to be out until all bumps/sores are scabbed over and there has been no fever for 24 hours, with no new sores/bumps having developed in the last 24 hours.

Our center keeps a digital copy of “Caring for Our Children: Standards and Resources” on hand to reference when needed for best practice.

Thank you in advance for your cooperation!

## **Communication With Families**

We use a variety of ways to communicate with you. The Remind app/ text communication is used to communicate daily, send photos, updates, etc. We will also use phone calls, emails, paper newsletters and flyers. We also have a private facebook page we use to share info that only enrolled families can see. This page is for current families that wish for their child’s picture to be shown.

## **Dual Language Learner Policy**

Children who are DLLs are learning in two or more languages, either simultaneously or sequentially. Our staff will use effective teaching practices that support children who are dual language learners (DLLs) in our classrooms by planning support strategies for early language and literacy development for all children, including the second language. We will find specific strategies to support linguistically diverse children in problem-solving, experimentation, brainstorming, planning, and related vocabulary learning. Staff will take the training supports needed to meet these needs in the classroom. If needed, a translator will be consulted, and printed materials will be converted for families.

## **Emergency Evacuation Plan Policy**

In the event of an emergency or natural disaster, we have an Emergency Evacuation Plan in place in case an emergency evacuation is necessary. The original plan is kept in the office and in the classrooms. The plan will be reviewed with you at the time of enrollment, and you may have access to this plan at any time after that upon request. You will sign up for the Remind alert system that we use at the time of your enrollment. This is an effective tool to be able to reach you in the event of an evacuation. It is your responsibility to enroll in this communication system.



## Inclusion, Suspension, and Expulsion Policy

### INCLUSION

Tiny Town Early Learning Center supports the policies of the Pennsylvania Office of Child Development and Early Learning, the US Departments of Health and Human Services and US Department of Education regarding the benefits of inclusion for all children. We promote inclusion and supports children with disabilities being enrolled alongside peers without disabilities in the same classrooms. We support the right of every young child and his or her family, regardless of ability, to participate in a broad range of activities and contexts as full members of community and society.

### SUSPENSION AND EXPULSION

It is the intent of Tiny Town Early Learning Center to work together with parents/guardians and families for the best care of the child. Working together as a team is a necessary step to correct repeated, inappropriate behaviors. Your patience, support and follow through are not only appreciated but necessary. Our goal is to implement appropriate and supportive positive behavior practices and reduce or eliminate the incidence of suspension and expulsion. If a child engages in repeated aggressive or inappropriate behavior, we will take some or all of the following steps:

- Collaboration with the family to create consistent positive behavior goals and plans to support the child learning the appropriate behavior
- Referral to early childhood and social service programs, serving families with young children
  - a. Early Intervention
  - b. Early Childhood Mental Health Consultation (ECMHC)
  - c. Behavior Health
  - d. Pennsylvania Positive Behavior Support Network (PAPBS)
  - e. Any other community resources that may address the behavior/needs of the child
- Consultation for the classroom through the Professional Development and Technical Assistance programs available from the Office of Child Development and Early Learning (OCDEL)

Additional procedures that help reduce the need for suspension and/or expulsion that will be taken by Tiny Town Early Learning Center are:

- Guidelines and training that determine how the staff interact with and engage the child in positive behavior support
- Opportunities for staff and parents to engage in two-way communication on challenges and successes
- Specific support for any child with a Family Service Plan (IFSP) or Individualized Education Plan (IEP) including support for the Early Education program from the child's Early Intervention program, modification of the IFSP or IEP to include support for behavior concerns, procedural safeguards for the parent and family in regard to suspension/expulsion.

- Dual Language Learners - We will include the child/families home language in the classroom by use off labels, books, and print. Any family wishing to have the newsletters, policy handbook or any other communication translated, please make that request known and we will do our best to make accommodations together.

### IMMEDIATE CAUSE FOR SUSPENSION and/or EXPULSION

- A parent/guardian is physically or verbally abusive, disrespectful, degrading or intimidating to the staff, children, or anyone else at the center.
- Potentially dangerous behavior by a parent or child that puts others in the program at risk for harm.

## Child Abuse Reporting Policy

Our staff are trained Mandated Reporters. Mandated reporters are required to make a report of suspected child abuse if they have reasonable cause to suspect that a child is a victim of child abuse.

The PA Child Protective Services Law (CPSL) was signed into law in 1975. It was enacted to protect children from abuse, allow the opportunity for healthy growth and development, and, whenever possible, preserve and stabilize the family.

## Shaken Baby Syndrome & Abusive Head Trauma

Shaken Baby Syndrome (SBS) is a preventable, severe form of physical child abuse resulting from violently shaking an infant by the shoulders, arms, or legs. SBS may result from both shaking alone or from shaking with impact.

Recognition of potential signs and symptoms of shaken baby syndrome and abusive head trauma

In more severe cases of SBS, babies may exhibit the following:

- Unresponsiveness/ Loss of consciousness/ No pulse/ Breathing problems

Babies suffering lesser damage from SBS may exhibit some of the following:

- Change in sleeping pattern/ inability to be awakened/ Vomiting/ Convulsions or seizures/ Irritability /Uncontrollable crying/ Inability to be consoled/ Inability to eat.

Shaken Baby Syndrome can potentially result in the following consequences:

- Death
- Blindness
- Mental retardation or developmental delays (any significant lags in a child's physical, cognitive, behavioral, emotional, or social development, in comparison with norms)<sup>7</sup> and learning disabilities
- Cerebral palsy
- Severe motor dysfunction (muscle weakness or paralysis)
- Spasticity (a condition in which certain muscles are continuously contracted— this contraction causes stiffness or tightness of the muscles and may interfere with movement, speech, and manner of walking)
- Seizures

Picking up a baby and shaking, throwing, hitting, or hurting him/her is never an appropriate response. It is important for caregivers to know how they can cope if they find themselves becoming frustrated

A crying baby can rattle even the most level-headed person. Why? It has to do with the way our brains are wired. We feel a sense of urgency when babies cry. It's almost like a fire alarm goes off in our brains. This is nature's way of making sure we do our jobs: respond to our babies' needs and take care of them! But what if we've done all we can to help, and the crying doesn't stop?

Strategies for coping with a crying, fussing, or distraught child

- Put the child down in a safe place, and alert another staff member that you need to take a break away from the child
- Put on soothing calming music to
- Deep breathing techniques to help your body relax and stay calm
- Remember that you have done everything that you can for the child, and that crying is normal.

Prevention and identification of child maltreatment

- Provide a safe indoor & outdoor environment
- Provide safe ratios and supervision
- Complete proper training for staff and offer to families support and guidance.
- Safe sleep practices

## IEPs and IFSPs Policy Implementation Plan

In order to ensure that the needs of children with an Individualized Education Plan (IEP) or an Individualized Family Service Plan (IFSP) are met, the following procedures will be implemented.

### Director will:

- Ask all families to complete a request form for a copy of a child's IEP/IFSP. This request will be placed in each child's file.
- File all copies of IEP/IFSPs in child's file in order to be readily available to share with teaching team.
- Provide copies of IEP/IFSP goals to the child's teacher(s) and discuss strategies for meeting the goals.
- Ensure all teachers are trained on how to implement an IEP/IFSP. Training will be documented in each teacher's professional development record (PDR).
- Contact early intervention staff/consultants to schedule periodic meetings with child's family and teacher(s) to discuss the child's progress and to increase strategies in adapting IEP/IFSP goals in classroom activities and routines.
- Request permission from families to attend any meetings with the early intervention team related to changes to the IEP/IFSP.
- Monitor teachers' work towards supporting the child in meeting IEP/IFSP goals.
- Request additional help from early intervention team if needed.
- Ensure teachers conduct family conferences to report on progress.

### Teaching Team will:

- Observe and document the child's progress towards goals weekly and use their notes to individualize lesson plans.
- Complete a communication log between home and the teachers daily for each child with an IEP/IFSP.
- Prepare for and conduct family conferences at least 3 times a year to share progress on IEP/IFSP goals, the child's development, and participation in the classroom.
- Meet with the family to plan for and discuss transitioning to new classrooms or programs. An individualized plan will be created as needed to ensure successful transition for the child.

## Scheduling Your Child for Care

If your child's schedule varies week to week, we ask that you give your child's schedule (drop off-pick up time) by Noon on Friday's so we may schedule staff accordingly for the next week. Staff schedules are given out on Friday's. If we do not have your child's schedule by then, there may be times when we do not have enough staff to comply with the allowed staff to student ratios set by the department of human services.

## **Policy Regarding Withdrawing A Child From Care**

A two-week notice is required when withdrawing the center. Written notice shall be given to the director with your reason and withdrawal date.

## **Policy Regarding Private pay to ELRC**

In the event that a family transfers to ELRC funding and they back date your start date and you are owed back overpayment, the amount will be put forward to your co-payments. In the event that you leave the center and there is still a balance, a check will be written to you for the amount still owed.

## **Policy Regarding Payments**

When you enroll with Tiny Town Early Learning Center, we are providing your family with a service. Payment is required to retain your child's space for the service of childcare. If your child does not attend for any reason including but not limited to illness, vacation, death in the family, center closure for weather/holiday, appointments etc, your weekly payment is still required to retain your child's space. Failure to comply with our payment policy will result in the loss of your child's space.

## **Positive Discipline Policy**

This issuance sets forth the policy regarding positive discipline methods to be used in our Classrooms. This policy also sets forth the policy forbidding the use of corporal punishment and total extended isolation as disciplinary measures.

Our policy disciplinary measures are consistent with the National Association for the Education of Young Children's Developmentally Appropriate Practices.

Corporal punishment and total or extended isolation are not consistent with these objectives. Corporal punishment is defined as, but not limited to, spanking, hitting, slapping, pulling, jerking, shaking, etc. Isolation includes, but is not restricted to: confining the child in a small area, retaining the child in the classroom while other children go to play, restricting the child from lunch with his/her classmates, enclosing the child in a confined structure, etc. Children may be removed from a situation with adult accompaniment.

### **GUIDELINES FOR POSITIVE DISCIPLINE**

The following are general guidelines and principles of positive discipline or positive guidance.

Positive discipline measures demonstrate respect for the child and are directed toward helping the child develop self-esteem, self-control and social competence. The best technique for dealing with misbehavior is PREVENTION. Try to head off situations before they occur. This requires that staff have a good idea of what triggers the misbehavior (KNOW YOUR CHILDREN). Establish rules and a routine so that children know what is expected of them and when it is expected. Children will respond much better to situations if they are following an established predictable routine. The adult providing that routine must know their child and be flexible enough to change that routine to help to prevent behavioral concerns. Adults need to be role models to provide guidance for appropriate behavior. Physical setup of your classroom, activity scheduling, manipulating the classroom environment, and being flexible (able to change if something isn't working) are necessary for preventing behavior concerns.

1. Staff will facilitate the development of self-esteem by expressing respect for, acceptance of children, and comforting the children regardless of their behavior.

- Staff must understand and accept age-appropriate behavior (messiness, assertiveness, crying, resistance, etc.).
- Staff must never scream, tease, humiliate, insult, blame, threaten, frighten, or laugh at a child.
- Address behavior concerns with the child and/or parents individually, not in a group.
- Staff should not discuss any child's' behavior in front of another parent, children or other staff. Concerns should be discussed privately with appropriate staff persons or family members involved.
- Let children know what behavior is acceptable through positive reinforcement (i.e. praise, hugs, pat on the back, sticker charts, special privileges, rewards, etc.).
- Staff are to reinforce rules verbally (feet belong on the floor, we use walking feet, gentle touches, etc.) and in writing by posting rebus style rules at the child's eye level. Classroom rules need to be reviewed and reinforced daily with the child.

2. Staff will facilitate the child's development of self-control by:

- Providing an environment that encourages self-discipline (pictures of toys on shelves to facilitate children's putting away their own toys, etc.)
- Redirecting children to appropriate behaviors or activities (guiding a child to sit in the chair instead of standing on it, while saying "We sit on chairs." or "Chairs are for sitting").
- Using logical consequences to help children be responsible for their own actions (if children spill their juice, then they help clean it up.)
- Patiently stating and reminding children of the rules in positive language ("We walk inside.").
- Ignoring inappropriate behaviors whenever possible (such as name calling, swearing). Simply state and model for the child more appropriate or correct words to use.
- Guiding children to resolve their own conflicts and modeling skills that helps

children solve their own problems ("I know you want to play with the Ernie puppet. Is there something else you could do while you wait?").

- Give appropriate choices to children. ("You may play with the puzzles at this table, or you may play at the water table while waiting to use the easel".)
  - Encourage children to use their words to express feeling. Help children to talk about their feelings and frustrations ("It's okay if you are angry at Pepsi, but you cannot hit her. It hurts her."). Adults are to put words to the feelings of the young child (I know that you are hurt because you have bumped your knee).
3. Time out is not a preferred method of discipline, since it is a form of punishment. However, there may be a time when a child needs to be removed from the situation, with the adult accompanying and remaining with the child.
  4. Use of food as a reward or punishment is prohibited, including coercion such as "If you want dessert, you have to eat all your food."
  5. The focus of the guidance should be on the behavior, not the child. Behaviors are "bad" or "good", not children.
  6. Staff concerns need to be documented via Anecdotal Notes.
  7. If staff have reasons to suspect a child has a severe concern, please make a written referral request.
  8. It is vital to have parents involved in all aspects of the education process. Parents must be informed whenever staff is experiencing behavior concerns with their child. This can be accomplished through phone contacts, conferences and/or home visits, and must be documented.

## Playground Safety & Dress Code

All students should have an extra set of clothes to keep in their child's cubby. Shirt, pants, underwear, and socks. Please update the set of clothes to accommodate your child's growth and the seasons. Any clothes left at this center after 10 days of a child's departure from care will be donated.

Tiny Town strives to maintain the safest possible environment for your child while he/she is attending our program - this includes indoors and outdoors or on outings. We focus on the safety of the buildings, grounds, classroom furniture, toys, and supplies. However, safety must begin at home with you.

Classrooms are required to take children outside daily, we provide that time in our instructional schedule, weather permitting. We are required to follow the standard of 25 degrees or above for outside play. When dressing your child, please consider these important safety guidelines:

**Appropriate clothing:** Please be sure to dress your child appropriately for the weather forecasted for the day and the typical weather of the season. Be sure to send a sweater, sweatshirt, or light jacket even on warmer days. During the winter months, please send a hat and gloves or mittens with your child. Dress your child in layers so that they may adjust to changing temperatures as needed.

Appropriate shoes: Open-toe shoes should not be worn at any time. Your child's toes could be injured if something was dropped on their foot, or other children step on them. Velcro tennis shoes have good tread for running and climbing as well as provide children with the benefit of independently putting on their own shoes. Children at this age are still developing and have not gained full motor control and are prone to trip, slip and fall. Please be sure that your child's shoes are well-fitting, closed-toe, and attached to the foot (no flip-flops or clogs without straps, etc.).

Safety of clothing: Consider the safety of the clothing you dress your child in each day. Drawstrings on children's clothing are a hidden hazard that can lead to death and injuries when they catch on items such as playground equipment, bus doors, and cribs. Hood/neck drawstrings on clothing can get caught on equipment and cause strangulation. Drawstrings on the waist or bottom of children's clothing can get caught on handrails. Try to dress your child in clothing without drawstrings.

Sun exposure: Please be sure to apply sunscreen to your child before coming into the classroom, especially during the warmer months when children go outside more often and have more skin exposed. Sunscreen will NOT be permitted to be kept here.

Other items: Be sure not to allow your child to come to school with objects which could be potentially dangerous. Check to see that there are no sharp objects in pockets which could poke through clothing and skin or jewelry which could get caught and choke or harm a child.

Playgrounds provide an important social and physical environment for the development of children. They offer children the chance to exercise, be outside in the fresh air, and socialize with other children. We are required by the department of human services to take children outside daily unless the heat index or wind chill indicate above or below certain temps.

## Policy on Toilet Training

When you feel your child is ready to be toilet trained, you first need to speak with the director. She will outline our schedule for training here at the center, and we will discuss your schedule at home. The only way to ensure success with potty training, is to ensure consistency both here and at home. You will be asked to bring in many extra pairs of clothing. We will continue to put a diaper on your child at naptime, until he or she is waking up dry. All children must potty train using material underwear. Pull-ups are NOT permitted at our center for potty training, this is our policy, no exceptions. Pull-ups feel just like a diaper to your child, which does not allow them to have a successful potty training experience, and their clothes have to be removed to put a new one on, which mimics a diaper change. If there is consistency both at home and school, your child should be successfully potty trained quickly.



Sometimes you may think your child is ready for potty training, however they may not have the muscle control yet. If over 2 week's time we do not see development, or if your child shows no interest in potty training, or if you are not being consistent at home and putting your child back into diapers, we will not continue with potty training at this time, and would suggest trying again in a month.

## **Policy to Refer Parents to Appropriate Social Services**

If you need a contact number or information on a community service that we have not passed out to you throughout the year, please ask and we will do our best to provide the information to you, or direct you to someone who can help. Some areas we may refer families to would be speech therapy, occupational therapy, mental health, educational, wellness, medical services, heating your home and electricity programs. As always, you will be given this information discretely, as it will be kept confidential.

When staff suspect a child has a developmental delay or other special need, we provide documentation, anecdotal records, checklists and observations done in the classroom that reflect the cause for concern. If the family has not brought the concern to our attention already, the family is consulted about their thoughts/concerns on the developmental delay or special need that we are bringing to their attention. The family is then given contact information and brochures on community recourses, or the intermediate unit to schedule evaluations.

## **Custody Policy**

We understand that all family situations are not the same. Any court ordered custody agreement **MUST** be kept on file at the center. Children will **ONLY** be released to those listed on their emergency contact form.

When parents cannot agree on their child's best interest or one parent may try to obtain possession of the child, we ask that you make us aware that such a situation exists.

We keep your child's best interest in mind. In severe cases of custody problems, we recommend that the parent contact the center immediately. If there is a possibility that harm may come to your child by attending the classroom, we will ask that you keep your child home until you seek legal advice. During this time, the program will make every attempt to work with you. We hope you will cooperate with us, and we will try to assist you in working through this process. Our priority is your child's well-being.

## Curriculum

Our center uses the creative curriculum in all of our classrooms. The philosophy behind Creative Curriculum© is that young children learn best by doing. Learning isn't just repeating what someone else says; it requires active thinking and experimenting to find out how things work and to learn firsthand about the world we live in. In their early years, children explore the world around them by using all their senses (touching, tasting, listening, smelling, and looking). It fosters beginning symbolic thinking, student and teacher relationships as well as independence. Children will learn at their own pace and in the ways that are best for them. In doing so they develop good habits and attitudes, particularly a positive sense of themselves, which will make a difference throughout their lives.

Creative Curriculum© identifies goals in all areas of development:

- Social: To help children feel comfortable in school, trust their environment, make friends, and feel they are a part of the group.
- Emotional: To help children experience pride and self-confidence, develop independence and self-control, and have a positive attitude toward life.
- Cognitive: Assists children to become confident learners by letting them try out their own ideas and experience success, and by helping them acquire learning skills such as the ability to solve problems, ask questions, and use words to describe their ideas, observations, and feelings.
- Physical: Helps children increase their large and small muscle skills and feel confident about what their bodies can do.

## Policy on Ratios and Staffing

It is our goal to keep your child with the same staff for the entire time they are in a particular classroom. We pride ourselves on having long-term staff who can remain with your child for the time the entire time they are in an age group. Our main staff do not move from classroom to classroom. This ensures your child will see the same person in the classroom every day, making an easier transition for your child when they are dropped off in the morning, and making the lines of communication easier for you and the staff caring for your child. Our toddler room staff will be with children for a mix of 24 months (ages 1yr-3yrs). We will then transition your child into the preschool room where they will be with the same staff for 2 years. At this time, we will work

with your family and the school district they will attend for kindergarten, to make sure a smooth transition occurs.

## Emergency Response Plan

Our center has a plan in place for emergency response actions, and our staff are trained on how to respond in an emergency situation. View our full emergency evacuation plan located in the office.

### Health Emergency

1. Access the situation
2. Perform CPR/First Aid if needed
3. If necessary, we will call 911.
4. Call the parent/guardian

### Tornado/Weather Emergency

1. Seek shelter with all students in the middle room or toddler room along the inside block wall. Children will be sitting backs against the walls with their heads down and their arms covering their heads, until the threat has passed.
2. If necessary, we will call 911.
3. If we are unable to stay in the building, we will proceed to designated meeting place outside on the playground. If we can not come back into the building, we will use our remind system to notify families to pick up their children from the playground. If the weather does not permit us to wait on the playground, we will use our Remind messaging system to notify families that we have evacuated to the Marriot, and direct them to pick up their children there.

### Fire Emergency

1. Pull fire Alarm if its safe to do so
2. Evacuate all children and staff
3. Proceed designated meeting space on the playground.
4. If the fire alarm was not pulled, and we need to call 911, we will call rom a neighbor's house. If we are unable to stay in the building, we will use our remind system to notify families to pick up their children from

the playground. If the weather does not permit us to wait on the playground, we will use our Remind messaging system to notify families that we have evacuated to the Marriot, and direct them to pick up their children there.

## Megan's Law Policy

The purpose of the Megan's Law Policy is to provide for the safety and well-being of all children entrusted in our care by minimizing the possibility that released sexual offenders will come in contact with children.

The Pennsylvania Registration of Sexual Offenders Act, 42 PA. C.S. 9791 et. seq., which is commonly referred to as Pennsylvania's Megan's Law ("PA. Megan's Law") is designed to safeguard the public from released sexual offenders. In accordance with PA's Megan's Law, certain sexual offenders are required to register a current address with the Pennsylvania State Police. The police department of the municipality where a sexual offender lives must provide relevant information about the sexual offender to certain individuals and entities in the community. Megan's Law Website is the avenue chosen to give the information. Pennsylvania law makers believe that sharing this information with the public will help protect the safety and general welfare of the public, particularly children.

- If you or someone that is listed on your child's emergency contact form is registered on Megan's Law, you **MUST** notify Tiny Town Early Learning Center Director immediately.

Actions listed below will be taken by Tiny Town upon the receipt of information pursuant to PA. Megan's Law:

- Program staff will be provided information regarding individuals whose children are enrolled in their area of service or with whom they have direct contact who are registered under PA. Megan's Law. Information would include name and address of the registered individual. Any staff provided with this information must keep it confidential other than exercising their job duties.

Individuals registered under Megan's Law will not be permitted to:

- Be on Tiny Town property or attend a program function where they may have contact with children who are not their own.
- If a parent/guardian is registered under Megan's Law, arrangements for an alternate drop off or pickup person should be made for the enrolled child to continue in attendance, as we will not permit a Megan's Law offender on the property.

Staff must immediately report any conduct they believe to be in violation of this policy to Westmoreland County Children & Youth.

If you, as a parent/guardian feel that the decision is unfair and wish to appeal, you must submit a letter and supporting documentation to the PA Pre-K Counts Director. The matter will be determined by a Grantee representative that will consult with legal counsel as appropriate. Within 30 days of the Grantee's receipt of the letter and documentation, a Private Industry Council representative as the Grantee will either meet with the parent or request additional information. If additional information is requested the representative of PIC will meet with the parent within 30 days of when the additional information was submitted. PIC will attempt to resolve the issue within 30 days of the meeting. This is the only level of appeal and a decision will be made on a case by case basis

## Preschool to Kindergarten Transition Plan

Your child will be transitioning from our Preschool to a Kindergarten classroom. We have been preparing your developing child for his/her transition. In our classroom, we use readings and videos, and pictures to introduce the students to the kindergarten classroom and what it will look like to ride on a bus. We will have a kindergarten teacher visit the classroom toward the end of the school year to talk to the children about kindergarten and what to expect from the teachers. When permitted, we take the children on a visit to a kindergarten classroom.

We collaborate with our local school districts on transition teams, to create a transition plan and continue our professional development. This relationship provides a smooth transition for our graduates to make sure they have a successful start to Kindergarten. We will assist in providing progress reports to the Kindergarten classroom, which will highlight educational, behavioral, social, emotional, and physical progress concerning your child. We share all of the child's screenings, authentic assessments, and work sampling assessments with our families, as well as the school district upon their entrance to kindergarten.

Any child with an IEP, we are available to assist in the transition procedure from Preschool to Kindergarten, as we can attend any IEP meetings.

Any transition activities that the kindergarten will be having at the school will be communicated to you through us. We will also communicate the dates for registration, and provide you with the registration packet.

Our Preschool graduation ceremony will be noted in the school calendar for all to attend.

We will also be available to you and your child during the Kindergarten experience, for childcare services, after-school care, summer care, or as an emotional support system.

This transition between developmental stages is an exciting time in the child's life! If you have any concerns or questions, feel free to ask the classroom teacher for a conference.

## Home to School Transition Plan

Tiny Town Early Learning Center that there are a number of transitions that children will encounter within their early years. We recognize that change and transitions can be overwhelming and unsettling for the children when in unfamiliar surroundings or introduced to new teachers, peers, and routines. We are committed to assisting families and children in making these transitions as seamless and comfortable as possible. Sharing and communicating with families is essential in this process.

Before your child begins preschool, they will visit the center to be introduced to the classroom and to the teacher. We send out a postcard to

your child's house to welcome them into our class, and let them know how excited we are for them to be in our preschool!

We will have an orientation for families and students to attend, where they will meet the teachers, their classmates, and find their own personal cubby in the classroom. At orientation, you will be given a folder that includes a newsletter, a daily schedule, family involvement in the classroom opportunities, surveys, and community programs and news. This folder will be a communication tool from classroom to home each day. At this time we will also discuss our family handbook, and answer any questions that you might have, and you will receive a little welcome bag with some community information in it.

Tiny Town has an open door policy, and we welcome family into the classroom at any time, as well as to read, share your occupation or hobby with the class, or to help out with parties and field trips.

Family teacher conferences will be held 3 times a year. At this time we will share with you your child's progress in the classroom, assessment findings, and review your at-home observations. Throughout the year, we will send home observations and assessments that you will share with your child's teacher. Collaboratively, we will ensure that your child is receiving the necessary tools to excel in the classroom. We will be able to identify your concerns, and ours from the classroom as well, and insure that your child is reviving the most opportunities that he/she can, and that we are individualizing their goals and experiences in the classroom.

## **Classroom to New Classroom Transition Plan**

As your child turns to the ages 3 and 5 (first day of kindergarten, we will begin to transition them into the next age level classroom. For your child entering preschool, this transition is often needing a little more time for them to adjust, as they have been with the same teacher for the past couple of years. We begin by bringing your child into this classroom for small periods of time beginning with our circle time and for some child directed center play. The full transition is based on your child's needs. If they are transitioning well, they will be moved to full time sooner, if they need more time to adjust in smaller increments, we will comply with their needs. Students once transitioned to a new classroom, will be with the same teacher until they age out of the class whenever possible.

## **School-Age Classroom to Self-Care Transition Policy**

When your school-age student transitions from our setting to home self care, we will do our best to prepare them to care for themselves while at home, and

to offer supports to you the parent in giving them guidance and confidence. Together we can come up with an individualized plan that you can take and follow through with at home. An “Exit Interview” will be scheduled with us, your child and you to review the plan.

- **Establishing House Rules and Routines**

There are many important steps you can take to ease your worries and help protect your child while you're not around. Sit down with her and go over the rules of your home including what to do if a stranger comes to the door or if friends want to come over. Decide together what kinds of snacks are allowed and how much, what things are "off limits" until a parent is home, and how the time alone will be spent.

Some working parents ask their child to check in by telephone. This is both a safety precaution and a way to hear a bit about your child's day. Arrange a backup person at work when you can't take the call. You and your child should agree on specific times when she can and cannot talk with friends on the phone.

For many families some kind of central check-in center at home is helpful. This can be a bulletin board or message area with magnets on the refrigerator door. You can post reminders for the day as well as important phone numbers.

Chores and projects can be a part of your child's afternoon routine. You should decide on specific times for chores, homework and free time. Keep a weekly schedule and checklist for your child to use. This routine will help your child feel secure and responsible.

- **Putting It All Together**

Making decisions for the care of your older child is a challenge for all parents. Take time to consider various ideas and options and resist making quick decisions. Every child is a unique individual and what works for one child may not necessarily work for yours.

Continually evaluate your arrangements and be flexible. Consider new ideas and change your choices if your plan doesn't work. Add or change rules if necessary. Your workable plan may breakdown along the way as activities and sports start and finish, a dance lesson is unexpectedly canceled or there is a weather emergency.

Talk often with your child and listen to her likes and dislikes, fears and frustrations, joys and triumphs. This is a time of increased responsibility and independence for her. Together you can build on her ability and confidence to care for herself.

- **Safety Tips**

Prepare your child to be ready for emergency situations. Go over the following together:

- his full name, address and phone number
- your full name and the address and phone number at your job
- the name and phone number of your designated back-up person
- the phone number for emergency services
- not to enter your home if a door or window is open or broken
- what to do if someone knocks on the door
- the location of a flashlight in good working order if the power should fail
- how to exit your home quickly in case of a fire
- the safety rules and routines of your home
- basic first aid procedures and the contents of your First Aid kit

- **Resources**

- One starting point in planning school age resources is to call the main office of your school district and your nearest child care resource and referral agency. Some communities will also offer park and recreation programs, youth organizations such as Boys and Girls Clubs and YMCAs.
- The American Red Cross offers a Basic Aid Training course for children ages 8 to 10. Children learn safety information, first aid procedures, and skills to respond to them Contact the American Red Cross office nearest to you for more information.
- National Institute on Out of School Time at Wellesley College in Massachusetts is a national organization providing information and assistance, programs and conferences, newsletters and materials. Visit [www.niost.org](http://www.niost.org).

*Credit: Childcare Aware of America*

Tiny Town provides all meals and snacks for children.

In accordance with Federal law and U.S. Department of Agriculture policy. At this institution, admission is open to all regardless of race, color, national origin, sex, age, or disability.

To file a complaint of discrimination, write USDA, Director, Office of Civil Rights, Room 326-W, Whitten building, 1400 Independence Avenue, SW, Washington, DC 20250-9410 or call (202) 720-5964 (voice and TDD). USDA is an equal opportunity provider and employer.

\*These policies are subject to change at any time and will be updated on our website at that time. Policies will be otherwise revised annually.