



Policies & Procedures

Handbook for families

Revised 9-2025

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WELCOME

Our Mission

DTDMIDTN are locally owned and operated child development centers. We are dedicated to a fun filled learning experience during the early years that is based on hands-on and play based learning. Our mission is to provide quality care and education during these critical years of development.

Program Philosophy

We believe that students develop, learn, and thrive first through imaginative play. Our teachers are facilitators of play and are trained to provide an atmosphere that promotes curiosity and imagination. By providing this environment, the children feel empowered to ask questions and explore the world around them.

STAFF AND CURRICULUM

Staff

Children deserve a fun and memorable childhood, and we pride ourselves on having a loving staff and home-like atmosphere in each of our locations to make that happen. Our educators are specifically chosen for their caring attitudes, knowledge of child development, and their enthusiasm for teaching young children. Our educators encourage, innovate, and facilitate development for a well-rounded preschool experience. Professional development is a continuous process for our staff. It includes training in First Aid, CPR, Sudden Infant Death Syndrome (SIDS) prevention, as well as age-specific training on child development. In addition, we make it a priority to remain informed about current child development practice, education research and trends to serve your child's needs most effectively. Each educational engineer undergoes a criminal background and fingerprint check before the first day of employment to ensure your child's safety.

State Requirements

We abide by state requirements. These rules and regulations guide our practices and processes. All staff members have a health screening, background check, and reference check before beginning employment. Furthermore, our staff members participate in additional training hours each year for continued professional development.

Curriculum

Our nationally recognized curriculum is a unique combination of practical and theoretical discovery. This learning approach focuses on encouraging, facilitating, and stimulating a child's development through hands-on activities for our older classrooms. Our curriculum uses a creative approach that will provide a foundation for each child's development. Our education program thrives on providing an environment where children use their imagination and are encouraged to learn through play experiences. Through this engaging and hands-on method, we encourage your children to explore, ask questions and discover through their own imagination, experiment and of course, interactive play.

Language Development:

In addition to the curriculum which features developmentally appropriate language and literacy activities, we also offer Baby Signs! All staff members are trained in this program and receive annual training in Language and Literacy implementation.

ENROLLMENT AND TUITION

Admission

Admission to the program is based on availability and the age of your child. Each family will complete an intake form prior to enrollment. When a classroom no longer has open enrollment positions, a waiting list will be established. Priority will be given to siblings of currently enrolled children and active military families. Otherwise, individuals will be placed on the waiting list on a first-come, first-served basis. DTD does not discriminate against any race, religion, nationality, gender, or sexual orientation. Continued enrollment in our program is based on accounts staying current and compliance with our behavior policies.

Inclusion/Non-Discrimination/Specials Needs

It is the policy of our company not to discriminate based on gender, color, religion, age, national origin, disability, sexual orientation, or military status in any of its activities or operations. We are committed to providing an inclusive and welcoming environment for all students and families.

Please complete the required intake form in its entirety so that we can better serve your child and family. If your child has special needs, we will work together to the best of our ability to provide accommodations. Please speak with your director to discuss any concerns or needs.

Enrollment Application and other mandatory paperwork

A thoroughly completed and signed application form is needed before starting as required by state regulation. You will also complete an intake form that will be used when determining enrollment. Please be sure to answer every question thoroughly. In addition, prior to your child's start date the family must provide an updated immunization record on an official state form and complete a health history form. The immunization record or exemption form must be up to date and signed or stamped by the child's physician. Failure to keep records updated can prevent you from being able to attend the program. **All children enrolled will begin on a 90-day probationary period.**

Family Orientation:

Once a member of the management team has contacted you and confirmed your enrollment at the center, an orientation/walk through will be scheduled. This visit will give you the opportunity to meet your teachers and ask questions prior to your first day. You will return and review any paperwork that is needed at this time.

Registration and Supply Fees

Initial registration fee and the first week of tuition are required to hold enrollment space until the requested start date. Failure to start on date set, can result in restricted availability, delayed start date, or change in tuition rate. These fees are non-refundable. To provide our excellent curriculum and activities, we require an annual Supply Fee, which is charged to all existing families and new families that begin in September.

Tuition Payments

Payment must be received prior to the first day your child attends. Thereafter, tuition is due weekly on Mondays. When withdrawing your child from the center, a written two-week notice is required. If no notice is given, you will be required to pay tuition for the additional two weeks.

- Tuition is based on enrollment NOT attendance. Full payment is required even if the child is not in attendance, regardless of absences or closings.
- No credit will be given for illness, center closing due to an emergency, or inclement weather. DTD MIDTN reserves the right to close the center for weather or safety-related reasons.
- Tuition can be paid through automatic bank drafts. This is what is recommended and preferred. If the draft is declined, an NSF fee will be charged. We reserve the right to discontinue auto drafts due to multiple NSF fees and require cash payments.
- Cash and checks are accepted but not recommended.
- Credit cards are accepted-Visa & MasterCard only. 3.5% convenience fee applied to the total transaction amount. Cards are processed on Friday prior to the upcoming week's tuition.
- Non-payment of tuition is grounds for immediate dismissal from the center.
- Any account paid after Monday will incur a late payment fee regardless of attendance.
- We reserve the right to disenroll or refuse services due to non-payment.

Tuition and Fee Changes

We reserve the right to adjust tuition and other fees at any time.

A tuition sheet for each location is available from center management.

Disenrollment

We require a two-week written notice to be given if a family ends enrollment at the center (including when a child leaves the center to attend kindergarten). Payment of tuition for these two weeks is required even if a family leaves prior to the end of the two-week period. We reserve the right to disenroll any family for any reason deemed necessary, including non-payment of tuition or other fees, disruptive or dangerous behavior as deemed by center staff, or the inappropriate or disruptive behavior of a parent/guardian that interferes with the operation of the center.

POLICIES AND PROCEDURES

Drop Off and Pick Up

Hours of Operation

DTD centers are open Monday-Friday. Please check with your center for hours of operation. Please refer to the list of closings later in this handbook.

After Hours Contact:

DTD offers an after hours phone number for emergencies: 615-495-9128

Security Codes and Entry

Safety and security are very important at our centers, which is why each family will have their own security code or fingerprint passcode to enter the building. If using a code, please do not share your code with anyone other than people who will pick up your children. Guests will be able to ring the bell and gain entry. Guest MUST provide ID when picking up. Children must be signed in and out daily as required by state regulation.

Absences and Late Arrivals

If your child will be absent, we ask that you notify us so that we can prepare for adequate staffing. If you are dropping off after 10am, it is required that you call the center for us to keep an accurate count of lunch and snack. This should only be special circumstances such as doctor's appointments. We expect all children there by 10:00a.m. daily or they will not be permitted to attend that day.

Release of Child Policy

Please inform your child's teacher or center management if someone other than you will be picking up your child. You will be asked to provide names of those individuals who are approved to pick up your child in the application procedure. DTD reserves the right to refuse to release a child to a person who appears physically, emotionally, or mentally unable to provide adequate care for the child as judged by the staff member responsible for the child. We will not be able to release a child to an adult who appears intoxicated. Any court-ordered or court mandated documented pick-up restrictions on either birth parent or legal guardians must be supplied to the center to be implemented. Failure to follow this policy can result in dismissal from the program. We reserve the right to ask for identification from any individual picking up a child from our program to verify authorization.

In the event an unauthorized person requests release of a child, authorization may be obtained by calling the parent/guardian.

- (i) The child care agency shall document the date and time of the contact, to who he/she spoke, and to whom the child was released.
- (ii) The child care agency shall verify the identity of the unauthorized person by requiring presentation of a photo identification.

Observation of children / Third party visitors

Written parent permission will be required for all non-agency employees who are on the premises. This includes non-childcare agency employees who are coming to observe children. A background check will be requested prior to admission.

Late Pick Up

Late pick up fees are put in place to cover the staff after the center closes. \$10.00 for the first 5 minutes past 6:00 pm, then \$1.00 per minute after that. Payment will go directly to the teacher who stays with the child. At 6:30 pm,

if the child has not been picked up and we are unable to reach you, the authorities will be called as required by the state regulations. We reserve the right to disenroll for excessive late pick up.

Dress/Attire

Part of creating childhood means FUN! When choosing your child's clothing, keep in mind that sometimes our fun can be messy! For this reason, please follow our clothing policies to ensure your child has the best experience.

- Please dress your child in seasonally appropriate and comfortable play clothes.
- Each child should have at least one, preferably two complete changes of seasonally appropriate play clothing, including socks and shoes, in his or her cubby always. (The number of spare sets needed may increase during potty training.) Please be sure to replace any articles of clothing that are used from the spare set.
- During the summer months, we will have water play. We will notify you of the times for water play so that you may provide a swimsuit, secure water shoes (i.e., closed toe with a backstrap), and towel.
- Please label ALL items (including clothing, coats, hats, bottles, baby food, bags, and sippy cups) that you bring to the center with your child's first and last name.
- All children will go outside daily, and MUST wear secure shoes (i.e., closed toe with a backstrap) at all times.
- Children may not wear necklaces (including teething necklaces), bracelets, or watches.
- All children should wear closed-toed shoes with a back strap. No flop flops.

Personal Belongings

Please refrain from allowing your child to bring personal belongings to the center other than those we request (see below). For the safety and well-being of all the children in our center, we ask that you do not allow your child to bring toys from home except on special "sharing" days. We are not responsible for personal items or toys from home that get lost or broken. Any items brought for a special reason requested by teachers need to be labeled appropriately with the child's first and last name. Labeling all your child's items is the best way to ensure they do not get misplaced.

Infants (6 weeks - 12 months)

Please bring the following supplies, **labeled with your child's first and last name:**

- Prepared bottles- Breast milk should be brought in pre-made bottles ready to warm and serve. These will be refrigerated immediately until feeding time.
- All bottles/nipples must be in good condition. Bottles, nipples and pacifiers are checked upon arrival. If wear/tear or damage is found the item will not be used.
- If your child uses formula, bottles should be brought in filled with pre-measured water. You will also provide pre-measured formula in a container. This will allow staff to quickly mix bottles and minimize room for error. We provide whole milk for infants no longer on formula, but you may bring labeled milk from home if you wish.
- Two complete changes of seasonal clothing
- Diapers and wipes
- Any unopened cereal or jar food. State law prohibits the center from accepting any opened baby food of any kind, except for homemade baby food. No glass bottles or baby food jars will be permitted.

Sudden Infant Death Syndrome (SIDS) special note:

We are proactive against SIDS. Cribs will only contain a sheet per state regulation. Mobiles, stuffed animals, extra blankets, and propping will not be allowed. Infants in cribs are checked at a minimum of every fifteen minutes during napping times.
No teething necklaces, pacifier clips or wubbaNubs.

Toddlers and Twos (12 months - 2 years)

Please bring the following supplies, labeled with your child's first and last name:

- Diapers and wipes
- A complete change of seasonal clothing including socks and underwear (if applicable)
- Sippy cups are provided. We provide milk, meals, and snacks for toddlers.
- We provide a sheet & light blanket for use on our nap cost/mats

- Pacifiers may be used in the Toddler classrooms at nap time only. No pacifiers will be allowed in the preschool classes.
- Children 2 and up should have pull ups that easily detach at the sides. This will help will potty training.

Preschoolers (3 years - 5 years)

Please bring the following supplies, labeled with your child's first and last name:

- A complete change of seasonal clothing including socks and underwear
- We provide a sheet & light blanket for use on our nap cots/mats
- All children **3 years of age** and older we need to be potty trained prior to moving into a room without a changing station unless they have a medical reason. Our facility and program are not designed for potty training in the older preschool rooms.

Communication and Parent Involvement

Communication

Communication with our families is a top priority. We have an open-door policy at our centers. We provide parent emails and electronic daily sheets with detailed information about your child's day. Electronic daily sheets will include details about meals, snacks, diaper/potty, nap times, activities, your child's behavior, and activities, as well as needed items (diapers, wipes, clothing, etc.). Information is logged in the app when time allows and not always live. In case of system failure, a paper copy will be provided. Fall & Spring Conferences will be offered as well to discuss this information. We are also happy to schedule parent meetings as needed to help resolve conflict and better serve our students. Please provide your child's teacher with any special instructions to help us serve your child better.

Conflict Resolution:

DTD wants to resolve conflict in a timely manner that allows both families and staff to offer feedback that works to better serve the children in our care. If a conflict arises, we will follow the steps listed below to resolve it as quickly as possible. Efforts will be made to be fair, impartial and respectful of all parties involved.

1. Center management will meet with the family to discuss the concern.
2. Families will be offered the opportunity to speak with the child's teachers.
3. Specialty resources will be offered/scheduled on an as needed basis.
4. If a resolution has not been reached after the first three steps, the Regional Director will intervene.

The Center management reserves the right to discontinue care, employment, issue a warning, or issue a probationary period if needed.

After hours contact information:

If you need to reach someone after hours please contact Lesley Hosford, C.O.O. The best phone number is (615) 495-9128.

Child Assessments

In continuing to provide the best educational experience for your child, we offer periodic developmental assessments throughout the year. In addition to the assessments, we offer conferences to discuss your child's development and to work with your child's teacher on special projects and activities uniquely designed for your child. This is also an opportunity to address any questions or comments you have. Conferences may be held at any time throughout the year, at either the request of the parent or the teacher. Each center will have at least one assessment date and they will be posted for you to sign up for a conference.

Please remember, drop-off and pick-up times are considered transition times for a classroom and can be busy. These transition times are not the best time to address your child's growth or development. Please let a

management team member know your question or request to schedule an appropriate time to discuss your child's needs.

Confidentiality Policy

Staff will have conversations with parents concerning only their child. We will not discuss other student's progress, behavior, or accidents with anyone other than the appropriate parties. Behavior issues with other children will NOT be discussed for any reason. Failure to follow this policy can result in disenrollment from our program. Personal info is NOT sold or shared.

Family Participation

We welcome family participation in your child's class and for the improvement of our program. Our center has an open-door policy. In addition to our Family Advisory Board, we have several regular opportunities for class participation, such as reading in your child's class, sharing special family traditions or cultures, assisting with parties and open houses, and volunteering in the class. Additional ideas and suggestions are always welcomed and appreciated, and surveys will be sent out to offer an opportunity to give feedback. We will also offer workshops throughout the year for families.

Community Outreach

DTD centers are active in the community in many ways. We believe community outreach is a wonderful way to teach children the importance of citizenship, compassion, and community. Each center participates by hosting drives or other charitable events.

Breastfeeding:

All DTD centers will offer a space for nursing mothers that is private and comfortable. Please speak with center management to discuss this.

Birthdays and Special Events

Birthday Policy

We love to celebrate! If you want to celebrate your child's birthday with the class, feel free to bring in non-food items such as party plates, cups, favors and etc. Your center will provide snacks. Any food items brought in MUST be store bought for management to check ingredients for allergens. **Please remember we are a nut free company.** You are welcome to stay for the celebration. Please discuss plans for the party with your child's teacher, including date and time, class allergies, developmentally appropriate food choices, and favors. Center management may approve individual plans. If you are handing out favors or invitations to parties outside of the school, you MUST bring enough for each child in the classroom, or the school cannot distribute them. Party favors will be given as the children are picked up for the day.

Holidays and Special Events

We will also celebrate holidays and special events. You will receive communication about specifics prior to the event.

Balloon Policy

Mylar helium balloons are the only type of balloons allowed in the school. Rubber or latex balloons are NOT allowed because of a potential choking hazard.

Nut-Free Commitment

DTD centers are completely nut free. Please refrain from bringing lunches, snacks or food for parties or other celebrations that contain any kind of nut. This would include peanuts (including peanut butter), hazelnuts (including Nutella™ and similar products), almonds (including almond milk, cashew milk), cashews, pecans, pistachios, walnuts, etc. During special celebrations, any items brought into the center MUST be store bought and sealed. Once brought to the center, **you will drop off the items at the front desk.** Please refrain from removing the ingredient labels, as this is how we will double check before delivering to the classrooms.

Due to continual changes in manufacturer's packaging and processing, please read the ingredients label of your food chosen to ensure that it does not contain any of the following: peanuts/nuts, peanut/nut butter, peanut/nut oil, peanut/nut flour, peanut/nut meal, or "may contain traces of peanuts/nuts," or "may have been manufactured in a facility where a nut product is produced or is manufactured." If any of these are listed on the food items or we do not have an ingredient list to check, the food items will not be consumed and will be left in the kitchen.

We thank you in sharing our commitment to ensuring a safe environment for all of our students and staff!

Diapering and Toilet Training

Diaper Changes/ Cloth Diapers

Part of our high standard of customer service is ensuring that all children are properly cared for. For children still in diapers, cleanliness is an essential factor of maintaining an appropriate level of care. Therefore, diapers/pull-ups will be changed when soiled or at minimum every two hours. Diaper changes will be noted on the child's daily activity sheet. The TN Diapering System will be used for all diaper changes. If you choose to use cloth diapers for your child, we ask that you have a plastic cover with insert over them and bring a sealable bag to enclose them in. We cannot discard human waste from cloth diapers as per state regulation. All children must wear a diaper, pull-up or underwear at all times.

Toilet training

When you are ready to start toilet training your child, we ask that you let us know what routines you are using at home so the teacher can do the same in the class. Consistency is key when toilet training. Please bring any supplies such as a few pairs of extra clothes, including socks and shoes, to put in the child's cubby for any accidents. (Extra resources are on our website, under "resources"). Children will begin training in the Preschool 1 classroom. Pull ups with detachable sides will be required. All children 3 years and older will be expected to be potty trained prior to moving into a classroom without a changing station. Please speak with your center Director if your child has developmental or medical reasons for not being potty trained. All children must wear a diaper, pull-up or underwear at all times.

Prevention of Unauthorized Access to Toileting Areas Policy

DTD is committed to maintain a secure and respectful environment for all children. Unauthorized access to toileting areas is strictly prohibited to protect children's privacy and promote their safety. The following procedures are in place: Access Control, Staff Training and Responsibilities, and Monitoring and Reporting. Visitors and unauthorized personnel are not permitted in toileting areas. Staff will inform visitors of these restrictions upon arrival. In the event an unauthorized individual attempts to access or observe the toilet area, staff will take immediate action and follow the action steps set forth in the policy.

Transitions

Transitioning into school/another classroom

As your child grows and develops through our school, he or she will transition from one class to another. We strive to make this as stress-free as possible, not only for the child but for you as well. There are many decisions involved in promoting children to the next class. Children are assessed by age as well as terms of their development. Interest level in the classroom activities is also taken into consideration. The classroom teacher and family will be consulted. When the final decision is made, you will get a transition letter that includes information about the next room. There will be a transition period to ensure that the child feels comfortable with the change. We will provide a transition form that details the plan for your child prior to the first visit to the new classroom. We help and encourage families to be involved in the process. We also offer a summer kindergarten readiness program that is designed to prepare all children who will be leaving the program for kindergarten. This program helps children and families transition to Elementary school.

Discipline and Behavior

Discipline Policy

Discipline is always in a manner which protects your child's dignity and well-being. Discipline will not be embarrassing, or abusive, and physical punishment will never be allowed. Discipline will be consistent and fair. The staff will use positive reinforcement and re-direction techniques. First, the child will be redirected verbally. If the behavior continues, the child may be separated from the group, but still within the classroom. If behavior escalates, cannot be controlled, or becomes violent towards others or self, the Director or Assistant Director will be involved and may contact parents to get involved in the process. This may include the request for the child to be picked up for the day. Behavioral issues that cannot be resolved, cause safety concerns or that are continuous may result in dismissal from the center. Please see below for further details on behavior issues or expulsion. All children are on a mandatory 90-day probation when enrolling.

Biting Policy

Biting is an age-appropriate stage of development for infants, toddlers, and on occasion preschoolers. In a group setting, most children will attempt biting at least once. When biting occurs, our focus will be on the children to determine why biting took place and what we can do to help. We reserve the right to send a child home for multiple biting incidents in the same day. Communication between teachers and families will be a key aspect in reducing this behavior. In some cases, management may dismiss a child if biting is excessive or aggressive.

Suspension and Expulsion Policy

We understand that children develop at different rates and demonstrate individual areas of strength. As staff, we want to ensure that each child can fully and safely participate in and benefit from daily activities at our center. We want to be sure to address any developmental challenges and/or maladaptive behaviors that may be causing distress in the classroom environment as early as possible to avoid suspension or expulsion from the program. Our goal is to incorporate positive discipline daily and to foster good relationships with parents to focus on preventing suspension or expulsion. All staff are aware of the expulsion and prevention policy.

Our staff will receive professional development to make sure that they have the competencies needed to provide a developmentally appropriate and stimulating learning environment. They will offer a classroom schedule that meets the needs of the children in their care and set appropriate expectations. Other practices include:

- Forming strong, supporting and nurturing relationships with children and families including valuing cultural diversity.
- Reinforce children's desired behaviors and implement logical, non-punitive consequences that are consistent and developmentally appropriate for challenging behaviors.
- Paying distinct attention to the developmental appropriateness of both behavioral expectations and consequences for challenging behavior, given the substantial developmental and experiential differences among children birth through five years of age.

If staff members have concerns, we will use the referral process listed below. This process was put in place to help us guide and monitor our work together as we develop specific strategies, modifications, interventions, or support that may be implemented in the classroom. This collaboration may also include any other education professional and resources necessary to support the child. The referral steps include:

- Written documentation: The teacher will fill out a behavior form for the student. This document will address the focus of concern and will identify any challenges that the student may be having in the classroom and the impact it has on their safety or learning (or the safety and learning of others).
- Observations and/or assessments will be completed center management regarding the intensity, frequency, and duration of the challenges.
- Center management (in conjuncture with staff) determines strategies that need to be implemented to help the child, and contact will be made to set up a meeting with the family.
- Families will be made aware of the tentative plan and the interventions if any are needed.
- Teachers and center management will implement agreed upon interventions for appropriate time. This may include additional support to teachers via CCR&R, behavioral consultants, and community resources. We will make reasonable accommodations to allow for progress.
- Management will monitor interventions and have follow up conferences or communications with families as needed.
- Families will be offered engagement opportunities

Department of mental health and substance abuse support for families
<https://www.tn.gov/behavioral-health/support-for-families.html>

Parent Tool Kit
www.parenttoolkit.com

Vanderbilt Kennedy Center
<https://vkc.mc.vanderbilt.edu>

Vanderbilt Peabody College Center on the Social and Emotional Foundations for Early Learning (CSEFEL)
<https://csefel.vanderbilt.edu/>

Tennessee Department of Education Tennessee Early Intervention Systems (TEIS)
<https://www.tn.gov/disability-and-aging/disability-aging-programs/teis.html>

We will make every possible effort to work with the child, the family, and appropriate professionals. If administration deems that the child is still not showing progress, we may not be the most appropriate setting for the child. A clear plan and timeline will be discussed to allow for progress and improvement.

Please note, if harmful or unsafe behaviors are being displayed (to self or other children or educators) the child may be immediately and without prior notice disenrolled from our program. The above steps are not mandatory, and a decision can be made immediately by center management to terminate enrollment. Our center needs full family support to ensure that the child benefits from such intervention. Lack of family support or communication may require that your child is dis-enrolled from the program.

Safety and Child Abuse Prevention

Video Monitoring

Closed-circuit is provided for on-site video monitoring. For the protection of our students, external access is restricted. Video footage will not be shared to protect the privacy of the children on the film.

Child Abuse Policy

We will comply with all Tennessee State laws in reporting any suspicion or evidence of child abuse. The Child Abuse Hotline (or 1-800-4-ACHILD) will be contacted, and a report will be filed. A report will be made to the police if necessary to ensure the safety and well-being of the child. The Department of Human Services will then be notified, and an incident report will be filed within 24 hours. Parents are also responsible for reporting suspected abuse. This applies to any setting families are in such as; grocery store, ball game/practice, park/playground, and other public spaces where they may suspect abuse.

Keeping Kids Safe

This curriculum is mandated by The Department of Human Services for all children 36 months and over. Families will sign a form to be kept in the child's file which states they understand that the school uses this curriculum and talks to the children about stranger danger, personal safety and sexual abuse. We will use the term "bathing suit area" to refer to private parts for ages 3-4 yrs and use anatomically correct words for ages 4yrs and older.

School Closings

Holiday Policy

We will observe and be closed for the following Holidays/Events:

- New Year's Day*
- Martin Luther King, Jr. Day
- President's Day
- Good Friday
- Spring In-Service Training (Friday before Memorial Day)
- Memorial Day
- Independence Day*

- Fall In-Service Training (Friday before Labor Day)
- Labor Day
- Thanksgiving Day and the Friday following
- Christmas Eve*
- Christmas Day*
- New Year's Eve - closing at 4:00pm if it falls on a weekday

*Note: Holidays listed above that fall on a Saturday will be observed on the Friday before, and those that fall on a Sunday will be observed on the Monday that follows.

Vacation/ Break Policy

DTD requires 52 weeks of payment regardless of attendance. You can choose to dis-enroll during extended breaks instead of paying the fee, but we cannot guarantee space will remain available upon your return and will be subject to new tuition rate. *As a reminder, tuition payment is for enrollment in our program and not for attendance.*

Inclement Weather Policy

Normal hours of operation are subject to change at any time to ensure the safety and well-being of your children and our staff. Emergency conditions cannot always be predicted with accuracy, so please be prepared for short notices on snow or ice days. Due to the unavoidable occurrence of emergency weather conditions, please remember any closure is to protect the well-being of the children in our care.

To get the news out quickly there are several ways we will contact parents about closings:

- News Channel 5: You can sign up on their website www.newschannel5.com to have specific closing or delay texted and/or emailed directly to you.
- Mass text alert and mass email: Please make sure management has the correct contact information for your family.
- Social Media: We will post closings on our Facebook page. Make sure to follow the Facebook page.

Illness and Medical Records

Illness Policy

We will communicate with you about any health issues that are noted while your child is at our center. As a courtesy to all children and staff, please keep the staff informed about any health issues your child may have. To protect the health and well-being of all children and staff within our center, the following health procedures and policies will be followed:

- We cannot admit a child who has any contagious illnesses or symptoms, including but not limited to:
 - A fever over 100.4 degrees
 - Vomiting
 - Diarrhea, 2 or more occurrences
 - Open sores & mouth sores
 - Unexplained or communicable rashes
 - Severe mucus drainage or mucus green in color
 - Conjunctivitis (a.k.a. pink eye)
 - Any other questionable symptoms

If your child becomes ill with any of the above while at the center, we will notify you and the child must be picked up within one hour of contact. DTD reserves the right to require a child to be picked up immediately for suspected contagion. You will be notified should your child be exposed to a contagious illness. Failure to follow this policy can result in dismissal from our program.

Your child must be symptom and medication free for 24 hours before returning to the center.

We reserve the right to request a physician's statement prior to readmitting a child to the center. DTD does not administer medication to any child without proper authorization. (See Medication Policy)

COVID 19

Please contact your center to discuss a timeline for your child to return after being diagnosed with COVID 19.

Lice Policy

Children must have proof of treatment and be nit free before returning to the center. A member of management will check to make sure child is free of lice upon return to school.

Medication Policy

We do not dispense any over the counter or prescription medication other than REQUIRED medical equipment or emergency medication for life-threatening conditions that is supported by written and signed emergency medical plan from a physician that is kept in your child's file.

Allergies and Special Dietary Requirements

For children needing substitution of menu items, we will provide one when possible. There are exceptions to the ability of substitutions, so we ask that you communicate any dietary needs to management. Families are responsible for supplying an USDA approved substitution for their child while in our care. Please keep allergens in mind when providing meal substitutions for your child.

Shot Records

An Immunization Certificate with current physical is required upon enrolling and must be attained before your start date. Immunizations must be kept up to date according to Tennessee State Law. Your child will not be allowed to remain in the center without up-to-date immunization/physical records or an exemption.

Accidents and Emergency Procedures

Accidents/ Incidents

Safety is an important part of our program. We believe it to be our top priority to keep your children safe each day. Although we have many procedures in place to prevent accidents, sometimes accidents are unavoidable as children explore and develop. In the event your child has a minor injury such as a bump, scrape, bite, etc. we reserve the right to treat your child with the proper first aid care and will contact you to inform you. We will also fill out an accident/incident report that will need to be signed by you or the person picking up your child that day. This must be done for any incident or accident in accordance with state regulation. We will use confidentiality for all individuals involved.

Emergency Medical Procedures

If your child requires emergency medical treatment, center staff will call 911 immediately. If your child requires emergency ambulance transportation, the ambulance drivers will transport your child to the closest local hospital at their discretion and depending on the speed with which your child must be treated. Decisions as to the necessity of emergency medical treatment will be made by the Director or Assistant Director, or another staff member standing in their position. Parents or legal guardians of the child will be notified as soon as possible and will be responsible for all medical expenses related to the child's injury including any medical transportation. It is the parent or legal guardian's responsibility to provide insurance information to medical personnel. Our employees are not responsible in any form for medical or transportation expenses. We will provide confidentiality for all parties involved. DTD or other involved individuals are not responsible for any medical expenses.

Man-Made Disaster Plan

In the event of a man-made disaster, such as a chemical spill, gas leak, etc., the following procedure will be followed: The children will be evacuated by employees and be transported in employee's automobiles to an alternative facility. All parents will be contacted and informed of the evacuation. Families will be given instructions on how they can pick up their children. An incident report will be filed with Department of Human Services within 24 hours of the incident.

Natural Disaster Plan

In the event of a natural disaster (e.g., tornado, threatening winds, etc.), the children will be moved to an inside room or area of the center in accordance with the center's approved emergency action plan. Once the school is under lock down, no children can be released, as per state regulation. In the event the situation requires

evacuation, the same procedure used for a man-made disaster will be followed. An evacuation plan is posted in all classrooms. Families will be notified as soon as possible. The Department of Human Resources will be informed in the event of an actual disaster, and an incident report will be filed within 24 hours. We will also follow a schedule of safety drills, such as fire and tornado drills, throughout the year to maintain preparedness for any emergency.

Lost or missing child:

DTD will offer a very quick and coordinated response to a missing or abducted child if necessary for a quick and positive resolution. We will evaluate each situation to determine if it is indeed a missing child. Notify all staff immediately. Staff will remain calm and notify appropriate parties, gather information, coordinate search and keep all other children in their designated classrooms with the door closed. All staff will receive training and practice drills regularly.

Dangerous Intruder:

In the event of an intruder, staff will pull shades, turn off lights, lock the classroom door and block the door if possible. They will then lock the children and themselves in the closet in a classroom and take the key with them ensuring they are locked and safe.

Infants

Infant Section

We have several specific policies in place to ensure the safety and wellbeing of our infants. We follow all **Infant Safe Sleep** practices.

- Infants must immediately be transferred to a crib if sleeping
- Teachers may not swaddle children, but sleep sacks are permitted if sleeveless
- No glass bottles or containers are allowed in the classrooms
- We are cloth diaper friendly! Please bring a plastic cover over the diaper along with a bag to enclose them in with your child's name on it
- We do not allow rice, food, or medicine in bottles
- We do not allow pacifiers with animals/clips attached in cribs
- We have individualized infant plans, however if the child is hungry, we will feed on demand as per state regulation

Miscellaneous

Social Media Policy

Follow us on Facebook, Instagram, and Pinterest! We do not allow teachers to put pictures of your children on their personal Facebook. We ask that you do not post pictures of children other than your own in social media without consent from that child's parent. Upon enrollment, you will need to complete and sign a photography waiver. Negative posts regarding the center or staff may result in a termination of enrollment.

Sunscreen/Bug spray Policy

During the summer months, the children are frequently outside exploring and learning. We typically apply bug spray and/or sunscreen during the months of May through August. Both will only be applied in the afternoon. These will be supplied by the center and families must sign a consent for us to apply it. You can find information about the brand used at your specific location. Please see center management for medical allergies to products.

Family recruitment of Staff

Our policy states that recruitment of any staff member is not allowed. DTD has incurred costs that factor into employing qualified staff members and we do not permit solicitation of said staff. If a staff member is solicited, you agree to pay DTD a minimum of \$1,500 plus any legal fees or court costs caused by this breach of terms. By acknowledging the receipt of this handbook, you agree to our non-recruitment policy listed above. This policy excludes evening and weekend times outside of our normal operating hours. We highly discourage staff being hired as babysitters.

Policy Changes

Policies are subject to change at any time. Every effort will be made to notify families in a timely fashion of any changes to the policies or procedures. An updated version of this handbook is always available online. Handbooks are reviewed and updated as deemed necessary by the State and Company.

Hand Washing Regimen:

Children's hands will be washed: upon arrival, before/after meals/snacks, after toileting or diapering, after contact with any bodily fluid, returning from playground, after messy classroom activities such as sand play or art, after using cleaning supplies, after administering first aid.

Handwashing Instructions:

1. Turn on warm water
2. Use plenty of soap
3. Rub hands vigorously for 15-20 seconds.
4. Dry with a paper towel.
5. Use foot pedal to dispose of paper towel in trash can.

Death of staff member or student:

DTD aims to provide a compassionate response while maintaining a supportive environment for staff, students, and families in the event of the death of a student. A summary of the policy is below:

Immediate Response: notification to adults, supporting staff, informing children, grief support, while maintaining confidentiality and sensitivity. Gradually return to normal routines while remaining mindful of children's emotions. We will review our policies annually and offer staff training.

Gold Sneaker Initiative

We offer your child healthy meal options in accordance with the guidelines of the USDA, and we are proud to be Gold Sneaker certified. If you prefer to bring your child's lunch from home or have any dietary restrictions, please remember that you MUST bring food that meets the guidelines, as well. If not, we will be required to supplement your child's meal with any missing items. For more information you can go to www.tn.gov/health/topic/goldsneaker. Gold Sneaker policies are reproduced below.

Physical Activity Policy

- Policy 1: Children attending less than a full day program shall be offered a proportional amount of the physical activity time as required by TDHS licensure rules. Physical activity for children ages three years and older must be a balance of structured and unstructured play, both indoors and outdoors (weather permitting) utilizing age-appropriate activities.
- Policy 2: Providers shall provide education (i.e., via parent meetings, provider newsletter articles, sharing of educational video resources, etc.) to families twice each year that addresses the importance of limiting screen time according to current American Academy of Pediatrics policy and the development of a Family Media Plan.
- Policy 3: Children shall not be allowed to remain sedentary or to sit passively for more than 60 minutes continuously, except for scheduled rest or naptime. Childcare director/owner shall take Go NAP SACC Self Assessments (Infants and Child Safety Physical Activity & Screen Time) to compare their physical activity practices to best practice standards.
- Policy 4: Childcare providers must ensure physical activity is a positive experience for children and that it is never used negatively or to control behavior.

Nutritional Policy

- Policy 5: Providers shall ensure appropriate infant and child feeding patterns, including breastfeeding. All educators shall be trained to advocate for breastfeeding, safely prepare expressed breastmilk for feeding, feed infants according to their individual needs, and store expressed breast milk properly. Providers shall publicly display their support for breastfeeding infants and mothers by posting signage or other publicly facing information (i.e., participate in Breastfeeding Welcomed Here through

the TN Department of Health or Team Nutrition resources for new and expectant moms about breastfeeding).

- Policy 6: Childcare educators shall ensure appropriate infant and child feeding patterns, including adequate time for snack and meal consumption and age-appropriate portion size. Childcare educators shall provide education to families twice each year (i.e., via parent meeting, provider newsletter articles, sharing of educational video resources, etc.) that addresses nutritional learning experiences, with a focus on adequate time for snacks and meals and age-appropriate portion size. All eating opportunities shall consist of respect for the child and promotion of a positive attitude toward food. Childcare educators shall apply evidence-based early food preference learning strategies such as introducing healthy foods, repeatedly pairing new healthy food choices with foods children already like and modeling consumption and enjoyment of healthy foods.

Tobacco Policy

- Policy 7: The Childcare provider campus shall be free of all tobacco and tobacco-related products, including smoking, smokeless and electronic products. The campus is inclusive of all vehicles used to transport enrolled children, all outdoor spaces, and all indoor locations, whether children are present. Childcare employees and volunteers may not use tobacco or tobacco-related products while off-campus at provider-related activities (i.e., field trips, walks, and all other outdoor activities). Employees who use tobacco products while off campus are required to change clothes and wash their hands thoroughly prior to interacting with children. "NO Smoking" signs shall be posted conspicuously at each childcare provider entrance, as required by state law.

DAILY ROUTINE

Meals and Snacks

We provide nutritious meals and snacks throughout the day. Menus are posted for your reference. Any changes in items served will be communicated. Meal and snack times are scheduled according to a group's age and developmental level. Please alert the staff concerning any special dietary needs or food allergies. Families are responsible for all meal substitutions. If you are providing lunch from home, please see USDA Nutritional recommendation for guidance. Food should also be in original container w/ingredients listed. We will also require a physician's note and DTD food substitution form since all substitutions should be for medical reasons.

Rest Time

Rest times are scheduled in the middle of the day after lunch as required rest time per state regulation. Rest times will vary according to the group's age and developmental level. Children will be offered two hours of naptime. Children are not required to sleep but must rest quietly as to not disturb other children who are sleeping.

Outside Play

We have separate, age-appropriate playgrounds. During a normal daily routine and weather permitting, children will play on the playground two times per day, in the morning and again in the afternoon. If weather conditions do not permit outdoor play, other gross motor activities will be substituted. In accordance with TN regulations, all children must have outside times if weather permits. We cannot restrain or exclude a child from having outside play time unless it is due to weather restrictions as outlined in the state regulations.

Sample Schedule

The following sample schedule is presented here to give you an idea of what your children will be doing throughout the day. Schedules are designed to be appropriate for the age and developmental level of the group. Please check with your child's teacher to see their regular schedule.

Sample Schedule

Opening-8:30 Arrival/ Free Play

8:30-9:15 Breakfast

9:15-9:45 Circle time/ Free Play

9:45-10:30 Small group focus/ Free Play

10:30-11:15 Outdoor Play (weather permitting)

11:15-11:45 Lunch

11:45-12:00 Prepare for Rest

12:00-2:00 Rest Time

2:00-2:30 Wake up/ Prepare for snack

2:30-3:00 Snack

3:00-4:00 Small groups/ Free Play

4:00-4:30 Outdoor Play

4:30-6:00 Group activity / Free Play

SUMMARY OF LICENSING REQUIREMENTS FOR CHILD CARE AGENCIES

This summary is a guide for parents of children in licensed child care agencies and it outlines some of the requirements child care agencies must meet in order to be licensed. **The purpose of licensing is the protection of children while under the care of child care agencies licensed by the Department of Human Services and to promote developmentally appropriate practices that enhance early learning and foster parental engagement.** The Department of Human Services licenses child care agencies with five (5) or more unrelated children operating for three (3) or more hours per day unless exempt. Questions about these requirements or concerns about an agency's compliance should be referred to the local DHS office. This summary does not contain all of the requirements for licensed child care agencies detailed in the Department's child care law and rules; therefore, you may ask your agency for the complete set of licensure rules for child care agencies or you can access the rules through the [Department's website](#)

Ownership, Organization, and Administration

- General liability, automobile liability and medical payment insurance coverage shall be maintained on the operations of the child care agency's facilities and vehicles.
- Enrollment of children less than six (6) weeks of age is prohibited.
- Children shall not be in care for more than twelve (12) hours in a twenty-four (24) hour period except in special circumstances.
- The agency must maintain written documentation that the parent performed an on-site visit to the agency to review the agency's facility and parent engagement strategies prior to enrolling the child (not required for children of homeless families).
- Child care agencies shall establish a drug testing policy for all staff having direct contact with children.
- A copy of the agency's policies, procedures, and the Department's Summary of Licensing Requirements shall be supplied to the parent upon admission of the child.
- Parents shall be permitted to see the professional credential(s) of staff upon request.
- During operating hours, parents shall be permitted immediate access to their children, unless legal documents prohibit or restrict access.
- Agency shall have ongoing communication with parents/guardians to include curriculum, changes in personnel, changes in policies and/or substantive licensing requirements, and any changes affecting children's routine care, and shall document such communication in writing.
- Child care agencies shall provide information about the benefits of immunizing children against influenza and other communicable diseases each August or September to parents/guardians of all children enrolled in the child care agency and document such communication in writing.
- The licensee and agency staff shall not disclose or knowingly permit the use by other persons, any information concerning a child or family except as required by law.
- The child care agency's current license and quality rating improvement system score shall be posted near the main entrance.
- A written expulsion policy shall be clearly articulated to parents and staff.

Staff

- Family and group home child care agencies must notify parents in advance of the person in charge during primary educator's absence.
- A staff member shall be designated to be in charge of the child care agency in the absence of the primary educator/director and the name of the person shall be communicated to staff. Such person shall be familiar with child care agency policies/procedures.
- Pr or to having unsupervised contact with children, new

employees shall receive orientation and pre-service training.

- Substitutes and practicum students providing services for more than 36 hours in a calendar year shall meet background check requirements and have a physical exam prior to beginning duties.
- Volunteers cannot be counted to meet the adult: child ratios and shall never be left alone with children.

Criminal Background Check

- Criminal background checks are required for all staff at least every five (5) years.
- The following persons are required to have a background check no more than ninety (90) days before having access to any child care agency: any person who owns or operates a child care agency; any person who applies to work in a child care agency; any person who will provide substitute services to a child care agency for more than thirty-six (36) hours in a calendar year and who is counted in the adult:child ratio; and any person who is fifteen (15) years of age or older who will reside in a child care agency.

Record Keeping

- A record for each child shall be maintained within the child care agency.
- All records shall be maintained in an organized manner onsite, in a centralized location, or available electronically, and made readily available upon Department request.
- Written plan of action must be endorsed by a physician for a child with life threatening allergies.
- Parent must provide written consent for emergency medical care/treatment.
- Written statement must be on file that lists to whom the child shall be released
- Written transportation agreement between parent and the child care agency regarding daily transportation shall be on file.
- Daily attendance records that include the full name and time in time out for each child shall be maintained on site.
- The child care agency shall obtain individual permission slips signed and dated by the parent for each field trip prior to the activity.
- Each infant, toddler and preschool child shall have a written transition plan for moving from one age group to another.
- The records of any child who is five (5) years old in an agency which lacks approved kindergarten status shall include a signed acknowledgment by the child's parents that recognizes that the child's attendance does not satisfy the mandatory kindergarten prerequisite for the child's enrollment in first grade.
- Children of homeless families and/or children in state custody may receive care for up to sixty (60) days prior to providing documentation of immunizations and well-child examinations.

Incident Reporting

- Incidents, accidents, injuries and signs of illness shall be reported to the parent no later than the child's release on the date of occurrence and documented immediately with speci

information; such information shall be provided to the parent the same day of the incident and filed in the child's record.

- The child care agency shall notify the Department of all serious incidents the same day of the incident by contacting the Complaint Hotline or submission via the parent portal.
- Serious incidents involving suspected child abuse or neglect must be reported to the Department of Children's Services.

Duty to Report Child Abuse and Neglect

- Every operator, owner, licensee, director, primary educator or staff member of, or substitute staff member or volunteer in, a child care agency licensed by the Department of Human Services is individually responsible and required to immediately report any reasonable suspicion of child abuse or neglect to either the Department of Children's Services and/or local law enforcement or the judge of the juvenile court in the county of the child's residence, pursuant to T.C.A. §§ 37-1-403 and 37-1-605.
- All child care agency staff shall receive training annually regarding proper procedures to report child abuse and neglect.

Supervision

- All areas of the building and grounds shall be visually inspected after closing for the day to ensure no children have been unintentionally left in any part of the facilities.
- Children shall be released to only the child's parent, or other person authorized by the parent in accordance with child care agency's policies.
- Child care agencies shall maintain a daily sign-in and sign-out sheet or electronic sign-in or sign-out record that includes each child's printed or typed full name, date, time of entry, time of departure and the name of the individual who brought the child and picked the child up.
- Educators providing supervision to children during meal and snack times are prohibited from engaging in activities unrelated to mealtime while children are eating.
- Child care agencies shall develop, follow and post a written mealtime supervision plan.
- Child care agencies shall develop and follow a written playground supervision plan.
- During field trips, the adult:child ratios shall be doubled, and attendance shall be checked prior to leaving the child care agency, upon arrival at each destination, at the beginning and end of each activity; upon departing each destination and upon arrival at the child care agency.
- For family and group homes the adult:child ratio shall be increased by one (1) during field trips.
- When children are engaged in activities in or near a body of water, the following requirements shall be met:

Age Group	Adult:Child Ratio
6 weeks–12 months	1:1
13 months – 35months	1:2
Three (3) years	1:3
Four (4) years	1:4
Five (5) years	1:5
School-age (Kindergarten and above)	1:10

- One (1) adult present shall have a current certificate in advanced aquatics lifesaving skills and shall supervise above the level of the swimmers.
- Safe sleep practices must be followed to prevent suffocation and deaths in infants:
 - ✓ Infants shall sleep in cribs or play yards with a firm sleep surface with a fitted sheet.
 - ✓ Infants shall not sleep on a sofa, soft mattress, adult bed, in a car seat, swing or other restraining devices.
 - ✓ Infants shall be positioned on their backs for sleeping
 - ✓ Bibs shall be removed prior to placing infants in a crib for sleeping.

- ✓ Soft bedding, mobiles and other toys that attach to any part of the crib are prohibited.
- ✓ Infants that arrive asleep in car seats or fall asleep in any piece of equipment other than a crib must be immediately removed and placed on their back in a crib.
- ✓ Avoid letting the infant overheat and ensure infants are dressed appropriately for the environment (no greater than 1 layer more than an adult would wear in the same environment).

- Any practice that is an exception to the Department's safe sleep supervision procedures shall not be used without written authorization from a physician.
- If there is a sleeping or resting child during nighttime, there shall be at least one (1) adult educator awake and supervising.

Health and Safety

- Children shall be checked upon arrival each day for signs of illness and injury.
- The receiving educator shall document any obvious marks or injuries and shall note any comments from the parents pertaining to the marks or injuries.
- A child showing signs of illness shall be cared for apart from other children to the extent that supervision can be maintained for all children, and the parent shall be contacted and arrangements made for pick up.
- At least one staff with certification in first aid and one certified in CPR shall be present on site at all times.
- A child diagnosed with a communicable disease shall have proof of treatment prior to readmission if necessary.
- Parents/guardians of every child enrolled shall be notified immediately if a diagnosed communicable disease has been identified in the agency.
- All medications shall be received from the parent by a designated staff person and administered by staff persons who have received training in medication administration.
- Unused medication shall be returned to the parent.
- Medication shall never be administered in bottles or infant feeders unless authorized by a physician.
- All medications shall be inaccessible to children unless a physician's authorization for the current school year is on file that allows a school-age child to have self-administered medication.
- Diaper cream, ointments, sunscreens and lotions shall be inaccessible to children.
- Smoking/vaping is not permitted in any indoor area or vehicle of the child care agency at any time.
- Smoking/vaping is not permitted on the playground or in any outdoor area accessible to children during the time children are present.
- The use of alcoholic beverages is not permitted in a child care agency during the hours of operation.
- Firearms shall not be on the premises of a child care agency, in any vehicle used to transport children or in the presence of a child.
- In a private residence, firearms shall be locked and unloaded with ammunition locked up separately.
- All items labeled "keep out of reach of children" shall be inaccessible to children.
- Personal belongings of residents and staff shall be inaccessible to children.
- Children's diapers shall be checked regularly throughout the day to determine if they are wet or soiled.
- Educators shall provide rich social interchanges and engaging eye contact during diapering.
- Educators shall utilize sanitary diapering procedures.
- Pre-school and school-age children requiring assistance with toileting, shall receive assistance in a location designated for

that purpose which provides privacy.

- Child care agencies shall use U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA)- registered products for cleaning, sanitizing and disinfecting.
- Staff members with signs of a communicable disease shall not be present.

Food and Food Service

- Educators and children shall wash their hands with soap and water.
- Children shall be seated at tables and chairs of appropriate size, and an educator shall be near any table or high chair where a child is eating.
- An infant shall be held while drinking from a bottle if the infant is too young to use a high chair.
- Educators shall ensure that infants have completed feeding and swallowed all milk/formula prior to being laid down.
- Bottles shall not be propped or given to a child while lying flat.
- Children shall not be permitted to carry a bottle with them throughout the day.
- Children shall not have food or drink while in beds, cots, cribs or on mats.
- In order to prevent injuries related to bottle warmers, crock pots and microwaves:
 - ✓ Crock pots are prohibited for use as bottle warmers.
 - ✓ Crock pots shall be kept in kitchen and inaccessible.
 - ✓ Microwave ovens and surrounding area, including cords, shall not be accessible to children.
 - ✓ School-age children shall use microwaves only under direct supervision.
- In order to prevent choking:
 - ✓ Solid foods, including cereal, shall not be given to children with normal eating abilities in bottles or infant feeders unless written authorization on file from doctor.
 - ✓ Food shall not be accessible/served until cut, chopped, diced, mashed for each child's age, chewing and swallowing ability.
 - ✓ Educators shall check to ensure that no food is left in the mouth of a child prior to placing down for sleep.
 - ✓ Educator is prohibited from performing classroom duties unrelated to food service during mealtime.
 - ✓ Children shall not wear teething necklaces, pacifiers, or any item around their neck or attached to their clothing.
- Breast milk/formula remaining in bottles after feeding shall be disposed of in accordance with timeframes recommended by Centers for Disease Control and Prevention.
- Frozen breast milk shall be labeled with date expressed and name of child.
- Food, formula, milk or breast milk brought from home shall be labeled with the child's name; the date received and shall be refrigerated immediately.
- Previously opened baby food jars shall not be accepted in the child care agency.
- If food is fed directly from the jar by the educator, the jar shall be used for only one feeding and discarded.
- Food provided by the agency shall be in accordance with the USDA's Child and Adult Care Food Program (CACFP) nutritional guidelines.
- No sugar sweetened beverages shall be served to children at any time by the child care agency.
- Children shall be given adequate time to eat.
- Food shall not be used as a reward and should not be forced or withheld.
- Each child's food allergies shall be posted where food is prepared and served.
- For a child with life threatening allergies, a written plan of action should be posted where the educator has immediate

access.

- Agency shall make accommodations that support and facilitate a family's decision to continue breast feeding.
- Home preserved food and raw milk are prohibited.

Equipment for Children

- Developmentally appropriate equipment and furnishings shall be available for each age group.
- All indoor and outdoor large and heavy equipment, appliances and furnishings shall be secured to prevent falling or tipping over.
- Electrical cords and cords on window blinds or curtains shall be inaccessible to children.
- Indoor equipment, materials, and toys shall be available to provide a variety of developmentally appropriate activities so that each child has at least two (2) choices during play time.
- In infant/toddler rooms, equipment and a safe space shall be provided for climbing, crawling, pulling up and exploring without the use of confining equipment.
- Trampolines are prohibited.
- Climbers, swings and other heavy equipment that could cause injury if toppled shall be securely anchored.
- Climbers and swings shall have a protective fall zone surface recognized by CPSC as a shock absorbing, resilient material.
- Portable equipment shall be securely anchored or rendered immobile if required by manufacturer.
- A quiet rest area and cots or mats shall be available for all children who want to rest or nap.
- For health and safety reasons each crib, cot, bed or mat shall be labeled to assure that each child naps on his/her own bedding.
- Cribs and play yards must comply with CPSC requirements.
- Mattresses and foam pads shall fit the crib without any gaps or spaces to prevent suffocation.
- A blanket or covering shall be available to each child sleeping on a mat.

Program, Language and Literacy Development

- Every child should have an opportunity to participate in program activities.
- The educator(s) shall give individual attention to each child throughout the day.
- Upon arrival, infants and toddlers shall be removed from car seats immediately.
- Child shall never be left unattended in any restraining device and shall not be kept in any restraining device longer than fifteen (15) minutes, except when eating while in a high chair.
- The use of electronic media and other electronic devices is prohibited for children less than two (2) years of age.
- Programs, movies, computer games, and music with violent or adult content shall not be permitted in children's presence.
- Child care agencies shall inform parents in writing of any scheduled media program viewing.
- Other activity choices shall be available to children who do not wish to participate in media time.
- Children of all ages who are in care more than three (3) daylight hours shall have a daily opportunity for outdoor play.
- Weather permitting, infants shall be taken outside two to three times per day.
- Children shall be properly dressed, and the length of time outside adjusted according to weather and age of the child.
- During outdoor play educators shall be alert for signs of weather-related distress such as dehydration and frostbite.
- Children in care for six (6) hours or more shall have an opportunity for a reclining rest period.
- No child shall be forced to lie down/nap or stay on a cot/mat for an extended period.
- Nap areas shall have adequate lighting to allow the educator to

see each child with a quick glance and respond appropriately to the child's physical and emotional needs.

- If music is played in areas where children sleep, it should be soothing and soft enough so children can be heard.
- Potentially shaming, humiliating, frightening, verbally abusive, injurious discipline methods, and/or techniques that isolate children are prohibited.
- Discipline shall not be related to food, rest, or toileting.
- Food shall not be used or withheld as a form of discipline. Active play opportunities shall not be withheld from children who have misbehaved.
- Spanking and all types of corporal punishment are prohibited.
- Toilet learning shall be done in cooperation with parents, and communication with parents maintained during the process.
- Activities shall be intentionally planned based upon the developmental age of the child.
- Infants, less than six (6) months of age shall have direct supervised tummy time every day when they are awake.
- During floor time/tummy time, the floor shall be clean and safe.
- Infants should be placed on a firm, safe surface for tummy time, with no soft materials placed under or around the infant during tummy time.
- If the infant falls asleep during tummy time, educators shall immediately place the infant in a crib on their back and follow all safe sleep procedures.
- For ages three (3) through school-age, a personal safety curriculum shall be provided annually.
- For school-age children the curriculum shall include instruction on reporting physical, sexual or verbal abuse.
- Parents shall be consulted in developing a plan to meet the individual needs of a child with special needs.

Physical Facilities

- All facilities shall annually pass an inspection verifying compliance with all applicable state and local fire and environmental requirements.
- At least one (1) working telephone shall be available at the agency and the telephone number made available to parents.
- Outdoor play areas shall contain a minimum of fifty (50) square feet of usable play space for each child using the area at one time.
- The outdoor play area shall be enclosed by fence or barrier at least four (4) feet in height.
- Pre-play inspection of outdoor play area shall be completed prior to each use.
- Sandboxes must be covered when not in use.
- Children shall not be present if an adequate water supply is not available.
- Children shall not be present if the sewage system is not operating.
- All rooms used by children shall be maintained at a temperature of between 68 to 78 degrees Fahrenheit.
- Children shall not be present if indoor temperature cannot be maintained between 68 to 78 degrees Fahrenheit.
- Unvented fuel burning heaters and portable heaters are prohibited.
- Swimming pools shall be made inaccessible to children by use of fences and locked gates.
- Swimming is prohibited in drop-in care.
- Swimming pools and/or wading pools shall not be used without prior approval by the Health Department.
- Animals shall be in good health and immunized; free of fleas/ticks; kept away from food storage/ preparation areas and contained in a way that does not allow unsupervised access.
- Reptiles and amphibians shall not be kept as pets.

Transportation

- Child care agencies shall not transport children without prior written approval by the Department.
- Agencies shall conduct vehicle emergency evacuation drills quarterly.
- Use of cell phones and texting is prohibited while driving.
- Routine transportation is limited to forty-five (45) minutes each way (does not apply to field trips for school-agers).
- Agencies shall maintain documentation of daily inspections and necessary repairs
- The interior temperature of the vehicle shall be monitored during extreme weather to ensure child safety.
- An adult must be in the vehicle whenever a child is in the vehicle.
- A passenger log with the first and last name of each child shall be used to track the loading and unloading of children during transport.
- If the child was loaded from home, the parent or other authorized person will additionally sign the log indicating that the child was placed on the vehicle.
- The log shall be updated as children are released from the vehicle.
- When the child is released to a parent or other authorized person, that person must sign the log indicating the release of that child to them.
- Immediately upon unloading the last child the driver must walk through the vehicle to confirm that all the children are off the vehicle.
- A staff person designated as reviewer shall walk through the vehicle to confirm that all the children are off the vehicle. The reviewer shall have no other responsibilities during the walk through of the vehicle.
- Family and group homes with a single educator shall develop a Department approved alternative system for ensuring all children are off the vehicle.
- When children are transported to school, they shall be unloaded only at the location designated by the school and only at the time the school is officially open with staff present to receive them.
- Drivers must submit to an annual health examination and pass a drug screening test.
- Drivers and monitors shall hold current certification in CPR and First Aid.
- The following equipment shall be maintained in the vehicle and stored in a manner which is not readily accessible to children: fire extinguisher, emergency reflective triangles; first aid kit; seat-belt cutter or similar device manufactured and designed to immediately release the vehicle's child restraint system(s) in an emergency; blood borne pathogenic clean-up kit; and working flashlight.
- All vehicles utilized by a child care agency which are designed to carry ten (10) or more passengers shall conform to all Federal Motor Vehicle Safety Standards for school buses.
- All child care vehicles designed by the vehicle manufacturer to carry ten (10) or more passengers shall be inspected as required by the Department.
- Child passenger restraints must be used in accordance with state law and federal law.
- Signage that includes the agency name, phone number and the Department's toll-free Child Care Complaint phone number must be on child care vehicles.

Emergency Preparedness

- The agency, in consultation with appropriate local authorities and local emergency management, shall develop a written multi-hazard plan to protect children in the event of emergencies.
- All child care agencies shall also inform parents and guardians

of children attending the child care agency of the plan.

Specific Requirements For Family Child Care Homes

- Adult:Child ratios shall be maintained at all times.
- Licensed capacity shall not be exceeded.
- Family Child Care Home Ratios and Group Size Chart

Maximum Number of Children and Ages (Including children "related" to the primary educator under nine (9) years of age)	Educators Required
Seven (7) or fewer children; and no more than four (4) under two (2) years	1
Seven (7) or fewer children; and five (5) or more under two (2) years	2
More than seven (7) children; and no more than four (4) under two (2) years	2
More than seven (7) children; and five (5) or more under two (2) years	3

- A qualified educator shall be on site any time the primary educator is not on site during child care operating hours.
- The maximum number of children present inside a physical space shall be determined by minimum square footage requirements.
- If the number of children exceeds seven (7) at one time or care is provided in one room of the home, the area shall provide thirty (30) square feet per child of usable play space.

Specific Requirements For Group Child Care Homes

- Adult:Child ratios shall be maintained at all times.
- The maximum number of children present shall not exceed twelve (12). Exception: Three (3) additional school-age children may be in care before/after school, school holidays/snow days and during summer vacation.
- Group Home Ratio and Group Size Chart:

Number of Children	Ages of Children	Educators Required
Twelve (12) – Fifteen (15) (any number over twelve (12) must be school-age)	No more than twelve (12) children three (3) years of age or older	1
Twelve (12) – Fifteen (15) (any number over twelve (12) must be school-age)	Up to nine (9) children under three (3) years of age; and no more than four (4) present under two (2) years of age	2
Twelve (12) – Fifteen (15) (any number over twelve (12) must be school-age)	Ten (10) or more under three (3) years of age	3

- If school-age children are enrolled, a school-age program shall be provided.
- If four (4) or more infants/toddlers attend, they shall have a separate and distinct space and their own educator.
- When children are sleeping or resting, there shall be at least one (1) adult awake and supervising and adult to child ratios shall be maintained.
- Primary educators shall have a high school diploma or equivalent.
- Owners who are employed elsewhere shall ensure that the primary educator is always on-site.
- The primary educator shall not be employed at any other job during the hours of operation unless the Department has approved the primary educator's employment in a program sponsored or recognized by the Department.
- A qualified educator shall be on-site any time that the primary educator is not on-site during child care operating hours.
- A minimum of thirty (30) square feet of useable indoor play space shall be provided for each child.
- The maximum number of children who may be present inside a physical space shall be determined in accordance with the minimum square footage requirements.

Specific Requirements For Child Care Centers

- Adult: child ratios must be maintained at all times.
- When more than twelve (12) children are present a second adult must be physically available on the premises.
- Child Care Ratio and Group Size Charts

Age of Children	Adult:Child Ratio	Maximum Group Size
6 weeks – 15 months	1:4	8
12 months – 30 months	1:6	12
24 months – 35 months	1:7	14
3 years	1:9	18
4 years	1:13	20
5 years	1:16	20
School-age (Kindergarten and above)	1:20	No max

Age of Children	Adult: Child Ratio	Maximum Group Size
6 weeks – 30 months	1:5	10
2 years – 4 years	1:8	16
2 ½ years – 3 years	1:9	18
2 ½ years – 5 years	1:11	20
2 ½ years – 12 years	1:10	10
3 years – 5 years	1:13	22
4 years – 5 years	1:16	24
5 years – 12 years	1:20	No max

- Ratio Chart first/last hour and one-half (½) of each day only:

Age of Children	Adult: Child Ratio	Maximum Group Size
2 ½ years – 5 years	1:10	10
3 years – 12 years	1:15	15
4 years – 12 years	1:20	20

- Each child must be on roll in a defined group and assigned to that group with a specific educator(s).
- Infants shall have a separate space and shall never be grouped with children older than thirty (30) months of age.
- Children shall not be promoted to a new group until required based upon the age and developmental needs of the child.
- Groups, excluding infants & toddlers, may be combined for short periods for a special activity no more than sixty (60) minutes per day as long as adult:child ratios are met.
- Each group shall have a designated classroom with enough space for the entire group.
- Child care centers shall provide written lesson plans for each group of children.
- When more than twelve (12) children in first grade and above are present, a separate educator, group, space and program shall be provided for them.
- The maximum number of children who may be present inside a physical space shall be determined in accordance with the minimum square footage requirements.
- A minimum of thirty (30) square feet of useable indoor play space shall be provided for each child.
- Each nap room shall contain a minimum of thirty (30) square feet of floor space per child.
- In an infant or toddler room with more than one educator, each educator shall be responsible for providing consistent care for a specific infant(s)/toddler(s) which includes but is not limited to: planning and record- keeping, communication, etc.
- Following the issuance of a license, a child care center may operate without an on-site director for a period of not more than sixty (60) days total within the licensing year.

Parent Handbook

Specific Requirements For Drop-In Child Care Centers

- Before accepting a child for care, the parent shall provide a statement regarding the estimated amount of time that the parent anticipates that the child will be in attendance.
- The child care agency shall familiarize staff with personal safety material and be prepared to discuss them with parents.
- The drop-in center shall have an on-site director and the director shall be at least twenty-one (21) years of age.
- The director shall have earned a high school diploma or its equivalent and one (1) year of full-time work experience with children in a group setting.
- Each educator who is used to meet the minimum required adult:child ratio shall have a high school diploma.
- Children shall be placed in age appropriate groups and with adequate adult educator supervision:

Age Grouping:	
Age of Children	Adult:Child Ratio
Six (6) weeks –Fifteen (15) months	1:4
Twelve (12) months – Thirty (30) month	1:8
Two (2) years	1:12
Three (3) years	1:15
Four (4) years	1:18
Five (5) years (not in Kindergarten)	1:20
School-age (Kindergarten and above)	1:22

- The adult:child ratio for a multi-age group containing infants:

Majority Age of Children Present	One Infant	Two Infants
12 months – 30 months	1:8	1:6
2 years	1:10	1:8
3 years	1:12	1:10
4 years	1:15	1:12
5 years (not in Kindergarten)	1:17	1:13
School-age (Kindergarten and above)	1:19	1:15

- If food is provided by the agency, it shall meet the USDA's Child and Adult Care Food Program nutritional guidelines.
- The maximum number of children who may be present inside a physical space shall be determined in accordance with the minimum square footage requirements.
- A minimum of thirty (30) square feet of useable indoor play space shall be provided for each child.
- Each nap room shall contain a minimum of thirty (30) square feet of floor space per child.
- Staff shall have documentation of all children's allergies and how to deal with any allergic reaction.
- Staff shall review emergency preparedness and fire procedures and shall physically walk through the evacuation process every quarter.
- Prohibited activities include swimming, transportation and the provision of specialized services.

Tennessee Department of Human Services
ChildCare Services website is located here:
[Child Care Services \(tn.gov\)](http://www.tn.gov/childcare)

A wealth of child care information can be found on the Department's website.

You can:

- ✓ Learn more about the rules
 - ✓ Learn more about the types of regulated care
 - ✓ Locate a child care provider
 - ✓ Learn more about the Quality Rating and Improvement System (formerly Report Card and Star Quality Program)
 - ✓ Locate the local child care licensing office
 - ✓ Review the current personal safety curriculum
 - ✓ Read about new initiatives in child care
 - ✓ Locate the nearest child care certificate office
 - ✓ Find info on choosing child care
 - ✓ Locate a child care resource and referral center
- And much more!

Child Care Resource and Referral Centers

The Tennessee Child Care Resource and Referral (CCR&R) Network has 9 CCR&R sites located across the state. Each CCR&R employs a team of highly qualified coaches who provide training and coaching to DHS licensed child care educators in their area. CCR&Rs also provide valuable resources to parents looking for quality child care. For more information visit the Child Care Services website or tnccrr.org

kidcentral TN

Information about child health, education, and development as well as available state services can be found at: <https://www.kidcentraltn.com/>

Department of Children's Services Hotline

Report Child Abuse or Neglect
1-877-237-0004

Child Care Complaint Hotline

Nashville Area: (615) 313-4820
Toll Free: 1-800-462-8261

If you have a concern about an existing child care agency or wish to report an illegal operation, call the Department's complaint hotline.