

Parent Handbook

www.growingmindsdaycare.org

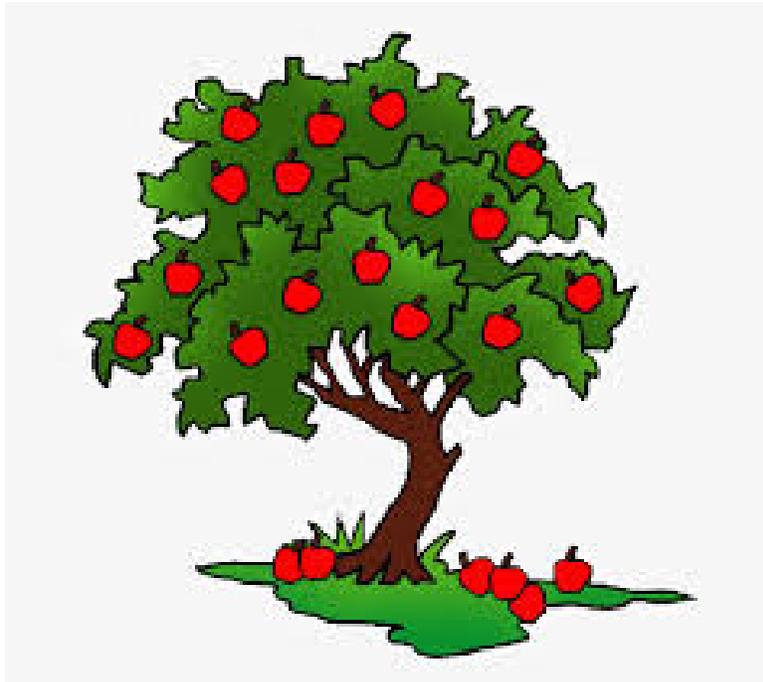


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Growing Minds Preschool and Daycare

Dear Families,

Welcome to Growing Minds Preschool and Daycare. We are delighted that you have chosen our childcare program! You have entrusted us with your most precious gift – your child. The teacher, in turn, have created a warm, caring, nurturing, educational environment in which your child can grow and learn. Our philosophy is that your child’s play is our adult work!

Growing Minds is run by qualified teachers, professionally trained directors, and caring, nurturing mothers.

Open and honest communication is the key to a successful child care experience. Please feel free to take advantage of our “Open Door” policy, visit your child at daycare and discuss any concerns or suggestions you may have at any time with the teachers or Director.

Thank you for the part you play in making your child’s experience with us a success.

The following is your copy of our parent’s handbook. It is designed to assist you in better understanding of our policies and procedures. We encourage all families to read through the handbook and become familiar with all policies. If you have any questions don’t hesitate to ask!

Welcome to Growing Minds Preschool and Daycare!

Sincerely,

Growing Minds Preschool and Daycare and Staff.

Our Mission Statement

A devoted preschool and daycare that creates fun learning environments, peace of mind, and flexibility for our families...because we care. Growing Minds Preschool and Daycare is your child’s home away from home!

Introduction

Welcome

New beginnings are exciting for children, their parents and teachers. At Growing Minds Preschool and Daycare, we are committed to helping you make an easy, comfortable transition into our program by clearly communicating our policies, procedures and philosophy. We hope these guidelines help your initial orientation to the daycare and serve as a handy reference throughout your child's enrollment. We know from experience that we cannot provide care and learning for children unless it takes place within the context of their family. In order to do so, we need your insights, your personal involvement, and both a personal and professional relationship with you. Together, Growing Minds Preschool and Daycare and your family make an excellent team.

Growing Minds Preschool and Daycare prides itself in providing children and their families with high quality care and education throughout Keene and surrounding areas. We are committed to providing excellence in education for infants through pre-k children.

We strive every day to address the needs of the children and families in our care. Our main objective is to ensure excellent programs, dedicated providers and a comfortable place for your children to learn! We invite you to learn more about our programs and to become part of our family where "learning is child's play"!

Statement of Philosophy

The main goal of Growing Minds Preschool and Daycare is to provide Keene and surrounding communities with the highest quality child care and early educational services in a safe, clean, diverse and friendly home environment designed to best meet the needs of the children.

Our program philosophy is based on the concept of developmentally appropriate practice and we use Growing Minds Preschool and Daycare curriculum which is aligned with the **New Hampshire Frameworks** as well as READY for Kindergarten standards. We are committed to providing experiences, which will aid in the **cognitive, physical, social, emotional, and language development** of each child. An atmosphere will be created to encourage children to learn through discovery, providing care with concern for each individual child's needs, interests, and ability level. Each child's developmental progress is fostered as he or she is guided through stimulating learning centers and creative activities. All areas of growth and development are provided for. Curiosity, exploration and sharing are encouraged.

An integral aspect of our philosophy is the importance of open communication between the school and family. The child's parent/guardian and family members are the **most significant people** in a child's life. Therefore, building a positive, communicative

relationship with each family is of the utmost importance. Mutual respect and cooperation between the adults in a child's life is essential in order for him or her to develop trust in the world. Parents are asked to share relevant information pertaining to their child with the child's caregiver and vice versa in order to establish a mutually supportive relationship. This ultimately allows for the most positive experience for everyone – children, families and daycare provider.

Above all, Growing Minds Preschool and Daycare aims to provide a warm, safe, loving, educational environment where children feel welcome, secure and nurtured while in our care.

Our Goals for Children:

1. Develop a sense of trust in their environment and those who care for them.
2. Develop a growing sense of autonomy and initiative.
3. Develop confidence and strong self-esteem.
4. Develop a love for learning and exploration.
5. Develop and demonstrate pro-social behaviors such as cooperation, a respect for diversity, and caring for their environment and those around us.
6. Acquire learning and problem solving skills.
7. Expand logical thinking skills.
8. Expand verbal communication skills.

Curriculum

Here at Growing Minds Preschool and Daycare we focus on a Ready for Kindergarten, and Early Learning Standards Curriculum. Both of these curriculum guidelines base activities around age appropriate learning through play. We focus on fine motor, gross motor, sensory, math, science, and many more areas of development throughout the day. The educated teachers created weekly themed curriculum to help your children stay activity engaged and learning!

The Enrollment Process

The choice you make about your child's early care and education is one of the most important decisions you will ever make. Our enrollment process is designed to allow you time to visit, to ask questions, to observe your child at play in his/her prospective classroom, and to assess whether your expectations and Growing Minds Preschool and Daycare are a good "fit".

Once the decision to enroll has been made, parents will need to submit all enrollment forms supplied by the director, current immunization and physical forms from the doctor and a \$40.00 enrollment fee. These records must be updated annually. All records must be provided prior to your child's start date. Please be sure to notify us when of your child's information changes. Keeping your children's records **up-to-date** helps to ensure that you can be reached in the event of an emergency.

Arrivals and Departures

If your child is going to be absent due to illness or a personal reason, please notify Growing Minds Preschool and Daycare as early as possible. **There are no rate reductions due to absences.** Your weekly fee will remain the same.

If you are going to be late for pick-up, please contact the center to make the necessary arrangements with regards to your emergency pick-up person. Other than parents, only persons with prior **written** authorization will be allowed to pick up a child. All will be asked to present a photo ID upon arrival. Children may only leave the center with an authorized adult. We do not accept verbal authorization for pick-up of children.

When parents enroll, they are informed of the Growing Minds Preschool and Daycare policies concerning custody disputes. Unless a copy of a **Court Order** granting custody to only one parent is on file, we do not have the legal authority to refuse parental pick-up. If a non-custodial parent does attempt to pick-up a child, the center will refuse by citing that we are obeying a Court Order. Always refer these matters to Growing Minds Preschool and Daycare teachers or Director.

Unless otherwise arrangements have been made for the day with the director, all children must arrive before 9:00 each day. This is when our day begins and we do not want the children missing out on routine and the learning activities for the day!

No child is allowed to be taken from the school by any person unless a car seat is being used in the vehicle. Growing Minds Preschool and Daycare teachers are morally and legally responsible for the well-being of your children. If no car seat is present, proper notification to the authorities will occur and the child will not be allowed to leave. Please understand this is for the safety of your children!

Children are signed in and out each day by their teacher. At the end of each week, we ask that you sign the attendance confirming that your child has been in attendance that week.

Parent Involvement

We have an open door policy; parents are free to visit our daycare at any time while their child is in attendance.

Communication

We strive to make Growing Minds Preschool and Daycare a place that is warm and cozy, a place of growth, challenge and friendships. Although we schedule formal times for discussions between parents and staff, we hope you will speak to us daily to keep us informed about the small but important changes that can affect your child's ongoing development. Our goal is to establish an **ongoing dialogue** with your family. In our younger programs, all of your child's daily routines will be recorded on a daily sheet as well as interactions that your child enjoyed throughout his or her day at Growing Minds Preschool and Daycare. We also encourage conversations to happen during your drop off and pick up times with your child's teachers.

We use the bright wheel app to update you about your child throughout the day.

Clothing and Diapers

Each child must have a weather appropriate extra set of clothes in the event that a child needs to change. Parents are responsible for taking soiled clothing home at the end of their child's day. All the items must be clearly labeled by the parents with the child's full name. Growing Minds Preschool and Daycare **is not responsible for lost or misplaced articles**. During the summer season, please also provide a bathing suit, towel, and water shoes.

All children should wear comfortable clothes that do not inhibit physical activity or messy art projects. Children should wear sneakers or rubber soled shoes that are safe for climbing and running.

All children need an extra set of clothes at school including: socks, shirt, underwear, pants, shorts, jacket or sweater.

1. For children who still wear diapers, parents need to provide a weekly supply of diapers.
2. Please label all clothing. We cannot be responsible for unlabeled clothes.
3. For children being toilet trained, we ask that you send in extra clothes and an adequate supply of underwear. All soiled clothes will be placed in a plastic bag for you to take home.

Toilet Learning

Toilet learning can be a challenging developmental phase and our goal is to work together with you on this process. Once you let us know that you have started toilet learning at home, we will work with you to make this consistent with what is happening at school. If you are thinking about starting the process but are unsure of where to begin, please see Growing Minds Preschool and Daycare teachers for resources on this topic. Children who are learning to be self-sufficient in the bathroom will have an easier time if they wear clothing that they can pull off and on by themselves. Parents of

children who are toilet training will receive daily communication regarding their child's toileting process.

Here at Growing Minds Preschool and Daycare we encourage the use of underwear rather than pull-ups or training pants. Through our experience we have learned that children often think of pull-ups like diapers and continue to use the bathroom in them.

We use a 20 minute timed schedule to put your child on the potty. Within a few weeks this schedule should become a routine (if done at home) and if the child is ready they should begin to be able to communicate that they need to use the potty.

Toys

The program you have chosen will engage and excite your child. We will provide challenging & stimulating toys for your child to play with every day. Although a small "snuggly" for naptime is welcome, we ask that children do not bring other toys from home. Please keep in mind that children's personal storage space is limited. Growing Minds Preschool and Daycare teachers may help children to be careful with their belongings, but they cannot be responsible for damage. Please talk with the teachers to see if the daycare has a "show and share" day for home toys.

Rest Period/Safe Sleeping Habits

As we are a licensed facility, it is a requirement by the State of New Hampshire Child Care regulations that all children rest for at least one hour per day. Your child will be an active and engaged learner while in the center. These busy days will tire out young children. Therefore, we will provide an established rest time for the children in conjunction with state requirements. Toddlers and preschoolers use mats and may bring a small blanket from home. These items will be stored at the center. If your child does not nap, we will provide quiet activities during the rest period. Infants that are 12 months or younger will sleep in cribs or pack and plays unless they are ready for a mat. Our center asks you to provide the bedding. All bedding needs to be washed weekly. In addition, we will ensure that your baby is always placed on his/her back for sleeping. The sleep surface will be a firm mattress in a safety-approved crib and the room temperature will cool, yet comfortable.

Here at Growing Minds Preschool and Daycare we will rub the child's back if they are having a hard time falling asleep. If you would not like us to comfort your child to sleep by rubbing his/her back please let us know.

****Please note that during nap time, classrooms follow the regulations that allow ratios to increase while children are napping so teachers may take a lunch break.**

Lunches and Snacks

Growing Minds Preschool and Daycare is a member of the Federal Child and Adult Care Food Program. All lunches, snacks, beverages will be provided by Growing Minds Preschool and Daycare through the CACFP food program. This is a USDA sponsored program, and we follow all the nutrition guidelines they provide. We provide weekly menus that are sent home to parents along with the monthly newsletter. Through the program we offer nutritious meals that include all important food groups.

Breakfast: 8:30-9:00am

Lunch 11:30-12:30

Afternoon snack 2:45-3:15pm

Infant Food Preparation

Your infant will follow the individualized daily schedule that you share with us. To follow this schedule for your child; please provide the appropriate amount of food each day labeled with your child's full name. All bottles, food containers and formula containers should be labeled with your child's name. All food and bottles that are brought in must be labeled with your child's first and last name. All unused food and bottles will be sent home with you and your child at the end of the day.

Nursing mothers are welcome to visit their infants at any time of the day. If you are supplying breast milk in bottles, that must be written on the bottle.

Special Snacks

If you wish to send in a special treat for their child's classroom (i.e. birthday cake), please ask the teachers or director in advance for the guidelines.

Weather & Related Closings

Please see WMUR for any closings/delays

In the event of severe weather, Little Learners Daycare will remain open, **as long as conditions allow**. Please call Growing Minds Preschool and Daycare before coming when weather is extreme or conditions are dangerous. If weather or road conditions worsen during the day, parents may be asked to pick up children for early closing. You will be notified in this case by Growing Minds Preschool and Daycare teachers.

Please be sure to leave an emergency number with the provider whenever you cannot be reached at your usual telephone number. It is absolutely necessary that either you or another adult properly designated by you be reachable at all times that your child is at the daycare for this reason.

Please note, although we understand the work schedules of families and work very hard to accommodate those schedules daily and throughout the year, if weather is bad we have the right to close the school at our discretion. As a preschool and daycare center, we employ teachers who also need to arrive safely to work and home again. We are only looking out for the safety of families, children, and teachers. We will never try to inconvenience families, only work to keep them safe! :)

Keeping Children Safe & Healthy

We strive to maintain the health and safety of all children enrolled in our home daycare. We have detailed several important policies below.

Managing Children's Behavior

Guidance and discipline should always be developmentally appropriate and based on an understanding of the individual needs of each child. Our goal is to enhance and reinforce the healthy growth and development of each child and to maintain a protective environment for the group and the individuals within it. Children who are treated with fair and consistent limits feel safe and tend to be cooperative. As they grow, children learn to better express their feelings and needs. Positive and clear expectations, individual attention and acknowledgment of positive behaviors work wonders.

But, of course there are times when conflict will arise. Whenever possible, children are encouraged to resolve conflicts and identify appropriate solutions for themselves. An observant provider will recognize when intervention is needed and will redirect the children involved to another activity. In doing so, the teacher will discuss the behavior with the children and restate the desired behavior, age permitting. In order to help children gain a better understanding of the desired behavior, the consequences of the inappropriate behavior will always be directly related to the actions of the child (i.e., putting away materials that have been misused or repairing a book that was intentionally torn).

Forcing a child to apologize to another child is not effective and does not validate the feelings of either child involved. Our teachers will provide guidance to children in a positive and consistent manner based on the understanding of the children's individual needs and the development of the child. When redirection is ineffective or when the difficult behavior is extreme or puts any child or teacher at risk, teachers may ask the director for assistance. Although it is important to allow children to express their anger in effective ways, keeping everyone safe is the first priority.

Occasionally, a brief, supervised separation from the rest of the group can help a child to regain control. In order to be effective however, it is essential that the adults involved remain calm. These interventions will not be overused or used in a shameful or punitive way. Children who are frequently singled out or isolated often think badly of themselves and can enter a spiral of negative reinforcement. This philosophy is consistent for children of all ages. Specific interventions are adjusted to match the developmental and understanding levels of the children. When appropriate and feasible, children will participate in the establishment of classroom rules, policies and procedures.

Please be aware that although the children are always supervised, children will be children and will occasionally get hurt. Whether it's from falling when running outside, bumping their head on a toy, or unfortunately getting into another child's personal space. Certain developmental behaviors do sometimes occur (biting, hitting, etc.) We continue to ensure the safety of all children and have put in place specific interventions to help in these situations. If your child does receive a "boo boo" during school hours, or gives another child a "boo boo", an accident report will be written up for you.

Biting Policy

Unfortunately biting typical occurs with toddlers, due to lack of ability to communicate, or to fulfill a sensory need. The following is our biting policy:

1. If a child bites for the first time, it is documented and the parents are spoke to about the incident at the end of the day.
2. If a child bites more than one time in a given day, staff with keep documentation and watch for a pattern of when biting occurs and continue to communicate with parents.
3. If the biting behavior continues, the director will set up a meeting with the parents to discuss this behavior and methods to control or stop it to ensure all children are successful and safe at the school.
4. If biting becomes extreme, we will refer the child to MDS or RISE for assistance with the behavior. The teachers will continue to offer the child something else to chew on, provide sensory toys to fulfill the need, redirect the child and shadow the child so the behavior does not affect other children.

Children's Health Records

Prior to enrolling, we require copies of updated physicals and immunization records for your child. These records must be updated with each new immunization or annual physical.

Allergies

If your child has an allergy, please inform the director upon enrolling. We will be happy to work out an Individual Health Care plan for your child. Please keep all relevant medications and written Physicians orders current at the center.

Good Health

Only children who are in good health may be brought to the center. When a child develops signs of illness during the day, parents will be called and will be expected to pick up their child as soon as possible. In the meantime, the child will be made comfortable in a quiet, supervised location away from other children.

Children in all programs will play outdoors daily, weather permitting. Parents are responsible for sending children in adequate clothing and footwear to maintain good health during outdoor play in all suitable weather conditions, including normal winter temperatures. **Please do not ask us to keep a child inside because of a cold or other illness. A child who is too sick to go outside is usually too sick to be in a child care situation with other children.**

Illness

Parents must understand that any new social setting offers exposure to illnesses and germs. Although teachers take precautions to prevent the spread of illness, children entering a new child care setting may seem to catch everything that goes around for several months. All staff members are trained to recognize the signs and symptoms of illness. Fever is a means of identifying an illness.

If your child is running a fever of 100 degrees or higher, you will be asked to pick up your child immediately. **Your child cannot return until he/she has been fever free for 24 hours without the aid of fever reducing medicine.** Please make arrangements for your child to stay home when they are ill. Children who are lethargic and unable to participate will not be allowed to stay in the center. To ensure that our environment remains safe for your child and all children, we ask that your child remain home when he or she is sick. If your child develops signs of illness at the center, we will call you and ask you to pick up your child.

Please refer to the list below for additional illnesses and symptoms of common childhood sicknesses, use this guide to determine if your child can return to the center.

Symptom or Illness Exclusion Period

Fever (*registering at or above 100 degrees*) Child must be fever free for at least 24 hours without the aid of fever reducing medicine

Diarrhea (*Not yet toilet trained –2 episodes, or for Toilet trained—one or more accidents*) until stool is of a consistent nature

Vomiting (*one or more episodes*) When vomiting resolves for at least 24 hours

Pink eye/Conjunctivitis 24 hours after antibiotic treatment has begun

Ear aches/ear infections Fever is gone, child no longer appears ill, 24 hours after start of medication

Strep throat Fever is gone, child is no longer in pain, 24 hours after antibiotic treatment has begun

Diaper Rash If infected, 24 hours after start of medication

Stomachache / Abdominal Pain (*Severe pain hinders child's ability to participate*) When pain is gone

Bronchitis When child is able to participate

Chicken Pox When all lesions are crusted over and there is no fever

Coxsackie Virus(*Hand, Foot & Mouth Syndrome*)Fever free for 24 hrs., blisters are healed, child is fever free, no sore throat, tiny blisters on mouth are comfortable and child feels well enough to participate

Croup (*Barking cough*) Fever free for 24 hours and breathing is normal

Fifth Disease Fever free for 24 hours

Impetigo 24 hrs. after treatment has begun

Lice / Scabies 24 hours after treatment and child is not free

Measles 6 days after onset of rash

Mumps 9 days after onset of swelling

Ringworm 24 hours after treatment begins

Roseola (*usually in children under 24 months*) Fever free for 24 hours

Scarlet Fever 24 hours after medication begins and no fever

Thrush No need to exclude but must be undergoing treatment prevent spreading to others

Tuberculosis After treatment has begun, fever is gone and health official states child is non-infectious

In the event that your child is diagnosed with a contagious illness that requires an antibiotic, he/she must be on the medication for 24 hours before they can return. This is necessary for two reasons. First, a child may have an allergic reaction to the medication within the first 24 hours, and second, they may not feel well enough to return until the medication has had a chance to take effect. Please notify Little Learners teachers of any diagnosed contagious illness, we are required to confidentially notify other parents.

Medications

If your child is on medication that needs to be administered during the daycare hours, a parent must sign a "Medical Authorization" form. All medication must be handed directly to Growing Minds Preschool and Daycare teachers or director. Do not leave medication in your child's backpack. No exception will be made to administer medication without a signed authorization form and doctors note. All medication must be in the original bottle. If the medication is prescription medication, the bottle must have the pharmacy's and physician's name clearly shown, as well as, the child's name. Siblings cannot share medicines. All medication will be administered according to physician's instructions on the medication form.

Administration of Medication

You must fill out a Medication Consent Form for the administering of any medications. If at all possible, please see if the dosage times can be arranged during the hours when your child is not attending the daycare. All prescribed medications must be given directly to Growing Minds Preschool and Daycare teachers or director. Non-refrigerated meds will be stored out of the reach of children. Meds requiring refrigeration will be stored in the kitchen.

Accidents and Emergencies

Keeping your child and all children safe is our priority. Growing Minds Preschool and Daycare teachers are trained in first aid and CPR for all age groups. Minor accidents, such as cuts and scrapes, will be treated with soap and water; bruises and bumps treated with ice. All incidents and injuries will be reported to parents on an Incident/Accident Report Form within 24 hours of any such occurrence. In the case of a more serious accidental injury, when we feel that medical attention is needed, we will call you or your designated contact. If necessary we will contact 911 and summon an ambulance. A staff member will accompany your child in the ambulance to a hospital and remain with your child until you arrive.

Child Protection Mandate

In order to grow and learn, a child's basic needs for good nutrition, shelter, medical care, cleanliness, appropriate discipline, love and self-esteem must be met. Children need a safe, nurturing environment that makes them feel secure and loved. Our commitment is to provide the best possible environment to support your child's healthy development. To help assist us in this endeavor, we ask that you keep us informed about any outside situations that will affect your child.

If you are having difficulty in providing for your child's needs, please speak with the director. She can provide you with a list of outside resources that can provide you with additional support. If you are unable or unwilling to meet your child's minimal needs, our staff is mandated by law to file a report with the Department of Children and Families.

Child Abuse and Neglect

Anyone may report concerns of Child Abuse and Neglect to the appropriate state agency as a non-mandated reporter. However Growing Minds Preschool and Daycare and its providers, fall into the following category, as a mandated reporter and we must file a report when if we believe a child is being abused or neglected.

Mandated Reporter

Any Physician, medical intern, or hospital personnel engaged in the examination, care or treatment of persons; medical examiner, psychologist; emergency medical technician; dentist, nurse; chiropractor; podiatrist; osteopath; public or private school teacher; educational administrator; guidance or family counselor; day care worker or any person paid to care for or work with a child in any public or private facility, or home or program licensed by the state. This includes programs that provide day care or residential services to children or which provide the services of child care systems and child care food programs; probation officer; clerk/magistrate of the district courts; social worker; foster parent; firefighter; or police officer.

Tuition Policies

In our efforts to provide the highest quality of care for your child, we are continually improving our program. Part of this process is to review tuition rates annually. Tuition rates are daycare-specific. The following policies apply to Growing Minds Preschool and Daycare Tuition Schedule.

Payment

Tuition is due **by the close of business on Friday, in advance of the week of care to be received.** A late fee will be added to the weekly tuition fee when not submitted on time.

Late Pick-Up Penalty

If a child is left at Growing Minds Preschool and Daycare past his/her contracted schedule and/or after our normal closing time, a penalty per child will be charged for all age groups.

Please see the Policy & Tuition sheets for specific information. If you are consistently late in picking up your child, you may be asked to secure other child care arrangements.

Returned Checks

If a check is returned, we will charge a return check fee to be included in the replacement payment. We reserve the right to refuse any other payments by check.

Non-Payment of Tuition

Non-payment or reoccurring late payment of fees can be sufficient cause for termination of service.

Holidays

Your child's center will be closed for national scheduled holidays, which are listed in your center's Policy and Tuition sheets. Tuition is charged on a weekly basis, without credit for those holidays for which we are closed.

Vacation/Leave of Absence/Absence Due to Illness

Growing Minds Preschool and Daycare has a policy that allows a vacation or a leave of absence from the center, free of tuition obligation, it is specified on the Policy and Tuition sheet for the center. If not, you are responsible for payment of weekly tuition to maintain your child's space in the center, even when you choose not to use the daycare. Children removed from the active roster for non-payment of tuition will lose a guaranteed space, and a new registration fee will be required to re-enroll, when space becomes available.

Tuition is not refunded or credited for days missed due to illness. When your child is going to be absent, please call the center as early as possible. If your child has a contagious illness, let us know so that we can alert other parents to look for symptoms in their children.

Leaving the Program

If you choose to take your child out of our daycare, **we require a two-week written notice**. Any security deposit retained at the center will be applied to a child's last week of care.

Final Note

As you read through this handbook, we hope that many of your questions are answered. We hope you are as excited as we are about your child starting in our program. We have exciting curriculum and new experiences for your child and your family to look forward to. The learning that occurs while they are in our care will be exceptional. We look forward to several years "where learning is child's play" for you and your family!

Welcome to Growing Minds Preschool and Daycare!

**To be signed and returned to
the Childcare Director and
placed on file.**

**I have received, read and understood the Little
Learners Preschool and Daycare parent
Handbook.**

Date: _____

Child's Name: _____

Signature of Parent: _____