

Parent Handbook & Registration Policies



Welcome to Minding Miracles Learning Center!

Thank you for considering Minding Miracles Learning Center for your child. The information contained in this "Parents Handbook" will introduce you to the philosophy and organization of the Center. It will serve as a quick reference to the daily operating policies and procedures. Your familiarity with them will help make your child's day a most rewarding experience.

The Center was created to meet the needs for high quality childcare for our community. We look forward to working with you to provide a secure foundation for your child to ensure successful growth and learning.

Not all policies and procedures can be listed here. We will be happy to answer any questions you may have.

Minding Miracles Learning Center is an equal opportunity employer and provider. We admit children without regard to race, color, gender, religion, national origin, or ancestry. We will assess your child and make program recommendations according to his/her needs as well as the needs of your family.

Our intention is to create a fun, loving, nonjudgmental environment where your child will thrive and excel. Programs are developed based on evidence-based practices and are implemented through a structured, systematic approach to learning. We believe that skills acquired in the preschool years are important, and the long-range impact of encouraging a fully engaged and motivated child is the corner stone to all learning.

PROGRAM PHILOSOPHY

We believe that quality childcare depends upon consistent caregiving in a language-rich environment. Children grow and learn best in a safe atmosphere that provides opportunities to explore, create and communicate with other children and adults. The program is designed to be inclusive of all children, including those with identified disabilities and special learning/developmental needs.

The Center's program is designed to include both planned and spontaneous activities in response to children's interests. Our daily schedule has a mix of student-led, play based and teacher directed lessons and activities. We infuse movement throughout the day & take the attention span of each child into consideration when planning activities. Experiences with music, movement, art, language and building are incorporated into daily plans. Regularly scheduled snacks and meals, rest time, indoor and outdoor play, and routines for primary care promote the child's health, comfort and ability to care for him/herself. Flexibility, choice-making and self-advocacy are promoted for the children as a group and as individuals.

Children are encouraged to develop a positive self-image, learn self-regulation skills and to cooperate with peers and caregivers. Clearly defined limits help them recognize and accept their emotions and express their feelings as they grow and feel secure in the world around them.

COMMITMENTS

Our commitments include:

- ✦ A commitment to excellence in partnership with our employees and clients; providing unparalleled service.
- ✦ A commitment to the creation of a comprehensive community in which clients and their families are supported to be the best versions of themselves.
- ✦ A commitment to be models in the realm of child development by promoting effective inclusive programs.
- ✦ A commitment to creating an environment where self-expression is embraced and nurtured; uniting all.
- ✦ A commitment to providing safe and secure environment where the child's health and security are our first priority.

We encourage parents to discuss with us any questions or concerns about the policies, services or program commitments. We will be happy to arrange a convenient opportunity for you to review and discuss these matters with us.

PROGRAMS & SERVICES:

Infant Program: (Not provided in Port Monmouth location)

The infant 1 program serves children from the age of six weeks through 12 months. Children in the infant 1 program eat, sleep, and play according to his or her own schedule. The infant 2 program serves children up to 24 months. Transition from the infant 1 into the infant 2 room is dependent on both chronological age & the developmental milestones of each individual child. Teaching staff in the infant 2 program specialize in helping children develop into a daily schedule compatible with learning and socialization. The program is designed to promote feelings of belonging and loving care, which help infants to grow and develop to their full potential.

Every infant is an individual with unique abilities, desires and emotions. Our program is designed to meet the specific needs of each child and to provide them with educational experiences. The curriculum for this age-group centers on gross & fine motor skills, primary care and pre-language skills. Building strong & trusting relationships between our caregivers and the children is the cornerstone of curricular guidelines for this age group.

Our highly qualified and professional teachers will guide and encourage your child in every stage of his or her development. We firmly believe in the need for open and thorough communication between teachers and families in order to provide loving care for children and cultivate confidence for parents.

Toddlers:

Our toddler program serves children from 24-36 months. The toddler classrooms are designed to provide stimulating experiences for the children where they can learn through their own inquisitiveness. The emphasis during the toddler years is on building self-confidence and fostering the natural curiosity that toddlers possess.

Throughout the day, toddlers enjoy the large variety of play materials that are made readily available to them, as well as creative centers where children can pretend, build with blocks and experiment in the sensory table. Art, music, language, and science activities geared to little hands are also introduced.

Our teachers offer the tenderness, warmth, and patience so essential to this young age. Children feel comfortable in our toddler class settings when their parents leave. Deep respect for each child ensures that your toddler will truly love his or her school environment and, from that, develop a long-lasting love for learning.

Jump Start Program:

Within our Jump Start Program, children from 36 through 48 months are beginning to learn the routines, ideals, and behavior necessary to be part of a classroom community. Our child-centered curriculum fosters independence as children plan their learning through center-based activities. Thematic units serve as a basis for students to cultivate a deeper understanding and interrelatedness to the curriculum.

A wide variety of activities and materials are strategically introduced in order to promote a love of learning and cultivate intrinsic motivation. Academic concepts are introduced and embedded into our daily activities. However, ABC's & 123's remain secondary to the acquisition of self-regulation, conflict resolution, critical thinking, and problem solving skills. The skill sets that are fostered in our Jump-Start Program are vital to teaching children to be proactive learners, compassionate friends and responsive students.

Preschoolers:

The Preschool Program serves children from age four through their entrance into kindergarten. The unique ability to merge developmentally appropriate practices with the ever-demanding 'readiness' requirements of kindergarten is the basis of Minding Miracles' Preschool Program. We prepare children socially and academically, as well as support and encourage the development of independence, responsibility, and confidence.

Our educational program focuses on each child's social, emotional, intellectual, and physical development by offering concrete, hands-on activities for the child to explore.

The preschool curriculum is designed to actively engage each child in developmentally appropriate activities, exploring the content areas of literacy, mathematics, science, social studies, the arts, and technology. Our skilled teachers prepare activities that are exciting and challenging, as well as supportive of each child's own learning style. The opportunity to learn through hands-on, innovative experiences that support the academic, social, and physical development of each student creates a natural differentiation, beneficial to all children.

CLASS PLACEMENT

The age guidelines listed in the class descriptions is for general guidance and is not typically the sole consideration for placement into an older class. Children are assessed for class placement into the older classes by chronological ages and in terms of their total development - social, physical and emotional. Interest level in the activities typical of each group is also taken into consideration, as is the actual availability of an open placement at a particular time that matches the enrollment days of the child being moved. The classroom teacher is consulted as to the readiness of the child. Parents will be notified and encouraged to set up a transitional conference with the new teacher.

INCLUSION STATEMENT

Minding Miracles was founded on the principle that all children benefit from the opportunity to learn alongside their peers in the natural environment. Every child is a myriad of strengths, challenges, likes, dislikes, and personality traits that make them unique. Embracing the uniqueness of all children is the essence of inclusive education. Inclusion offers the opportunity to teach children to understand, respect, and value diversity. This notion will enhance each child's conception of individualization, thus generating positive relationships amongst each citizen; impacting society at large.

We believe that inclusion isn't a destination to be reached after attaining prerequisite milestones but is a right that all children warrant. Children, by nature, do not discriminate based on skill levels or abilities. Inclusion gives all students the opportunity to learn from individuals who exhibit differences that teach tolerance, patience, communication, and acceptance. To that end, Minding Miracles' staff will make every attempt to support *all* students in an inclusive environment that scaffolds development and fosters friendship.

SPECIAL NEEDS STATEMENT

MMLC staff undergoes ongoing training to support students who exhibit special health, developmental and behavioral needs in an inclusive environment. However, the need for external therapies, support services and medical support must be elicited from

parents/guardians. Every effort will be made to work with students who have special needs in conjunction with parents and service providers; however, when recommendations are made by MM staff for further exploration of services needed to support the child, parents are expected to take timely action. It is only with parental support that we can fully support the growth of each child.

PHYSICAL LEARNING ENVIRONMENT

Each classroom is organized with areas for block play, fine motor toys, art/creativity, dramatic play, and reading in addition to larger spaces for group activities. All classroom materials have been specially selected to target the physical, academic, and social needs of each class population, as well as to accommodate the interests of the individuals in each class.

Safety considerations are targeted and addressed on a daily basis. Monitoring of recalled or unsafe products is ongoing and such products are immediately removed from the school. A list of recalled products can be found at <http://www.state.nj.us/lps/ca/recall/>.

ASSESSMENT OF CHILD PROGRESS

Part of efficiently planning the implementation of an effective early childhood program includes ongoing assessment of children across all developmental domains. Assessment at Minding Miracles plays an important part in helping parents, caretakers, and teachers to recognize children's progress, understand their needs and to plan activities & support. The following assessments will be conducted for Minding Miracles' students:

- **ASQ-3:** The ASQ-3 is a developmental screening tool that pinpoints developmental progress in children between the ages of one month to 5 $\frac{1}{2}$ years. Parents will be asked to fill out the assessment upon enrollment and annually. Depending on the results of the assessment, parents may be asked to fill out the questionnaire more frequently in order to closely watch progress and needs.
- **Curriculum based assessment:** The COR Advantage Assessment is used in conjunction with the Highscope Curriculum to monitor progress across the developmental domains. Data collected through observations serves as a guide for teachers as they intentionally set learning goals, plan activities, and determine adult-child interaction strategies. The COR Advantage Assessment is performed and maintained ongoingly.
- **CDC Developmental Milestones:** The CDC Milestones is a brief assessment checklist based on overall development for each age and stage. The Milestone checklists allow caretakers to determine if red flags exist in a child's development in order to help parents prepare for any additional learning or medical needs that may need to be addressed.

Parent/guardian contribution is highly valued in our assessment process. Parents may be asked to fill out checklists/questionnaires, participate in conferences, carry-over interventions or consult with medical

personnel within the assessment process. By signing-off on our handbook receipt, you are providing Minding Miracles with permission to perform authentic assessments on your child.

FAMILY INVOLVEMENT & COMMUNICATION

In addition to conferences and assessments, there are many ways to keep you knowledgeable about what is happening in your child's classroom. We believe that open, honest, and comprehensive communication is critical to our ability to serve your family. We encourage families to openly communicate your questions or concerns. It is essential that at least one parent signs up for the Brightwheel app in order to gain access to your child's account.

Some of the ways you can expect Minding Miracles to communicate with your family:

- Newsletters
- Telephone calls as needed
- E-mail
- Daily recall sheets (posted on Brightwheel)
- Pictures, videos & notes posted on the Brightwheel app
- Notices
- Messages through our automated systems

Accidents or injuries that occur while at the center will be communicated via a Brightwheel notification or phone call, depending on the nature of the injury. Any injury requiring first-aid care or involving a head, neck or face injury will be reported via a phone call. All accidents/injuries will be documented on an accident report and will be stored in your child's file.

We encourage parents to participate in classroom activities whenever your schedule allows. You can participate through sharing your culture or talent, volunteering during class parties, being a guest reader, donating needed items for activities or attending extra-curricular school functions. Participation in school activities is a proactive way for you to develop a relationship with your child's teaching staff, their peers, and other parents. It also allows parents the opportunity to fully understand the procedures, routines, and interactions that occur in the classroom.

Parents may visit the center at any time without securing prior permission. However, if there are problems arising from parent visits that interfere with the deliverance of quality childcare, then the parent(s) will not be permitted in the classroom.

HOLIDAYS, BIRTHDAYS & CELEBRATIONS

Notifications regarding parent involvement, requests for supplies and activities planned for holiday celebrations will be communicated via the Brightwheel and/or Sign-up genius apps. Sign-

up genius will send parents in the class an email or link to enable parents to register for supplies or involvement opportunities. Minding Miracles attempts to choose foods and activities for special occasions that are well-balanced, tied to our curriculum and multi-cultural in nature. If you have suggestions for ways that your home culture can be tied into our holiday celebrations, please feel free to contact your child's teacher or the center manager. Ideas are always welcome.

Birthday celebrations are an important way for our students to share their special day with their school community. We welcome celebrations within the school. Please contact your child's teacher before sending treats into school so that we can go over our policy regarding foods from home, treat bags and allergens.

CHILD ABUSE POLICY

All staff of Minding Miracles Learning Center are mandated reporters and are required to report any suspected abuse, neglect or maltreatment on the part of an employee, parent, or volunteer. Any abuse or maltreatment of a child, either as an incident of discipline or otherwise is prohibited. Any means of corporal punishment will not be tolerated. If any type of abuse or neglect is suspected, it will be reported to the NJ Department of Child Protection and Permanency (DCPP).

CONFIDENTIALITY POLICY

It is our intention to respect the privacy of children and their parents/ guardians/caregivers. We aim to ensure that all families can share their information in confidence and that it will only be used to enhance the welfare of the children in our care.

To ensure that all those attending and working at Minding Miracles can do so with confidence, we will respect confidentiality in the following ways:

- Parents have access to the records of their own children, but do not have access to information about any other child.
- Staff will not discuss individual children with people other than the parents/guardians/caregivers of that child.
- Information given by parents/guardians/caregivers to Minding Miracles staff will not be passed on to other parents/guardians/caregivers without permission.
- Parent permission will be sought before individual photographs of the children are taken for display work or to display on social media and our website.
- Issues to do with the employment of staff, whether paid or unpaid, will remain confidential to the people directly involved with making personnel decisions.
- For accident/injury/behavior reports, parents will be given information directly related to their child (as per NJ-Office of Licensing policy) but will not be given the names of other children involved in the incident.

HOME VISITS AND PARENT COACHING

As part of the commitment to serving your family, Minding Miracles provides opportunities for home visits, individual coaching sessions and group parent training. We encourage parents to take advantage of these opportunities; however, participation is not mandatory. Home visits are focused twice per year but can be scheduled at any time by reaching out to the center manager. Home visits and coaching sessions can be helpful in developing a strong stream of communication between home & school, assisting in cultural connections, development of new strategies & skills useful in supporting your child's development, troubleshooting behavior strategies, supporting routines, and identifying ways in which MM staff can access additional resources to support your family.

SPECIAL SERVICES

Because of the varied needs of each student and family, Minding Miracles offers a wide variety of services to help accommodate our student population. Some of these services include referral services for special needs, applied behavior analysis, tutoring, after-hour care, and home visits for parent coaching. We strongly encourage you to discuss your family's needs with us and allow us to assist you in any way possible.

STAFF ROLES

All of our staff members are highly trained in child development, behavior modification strategies, crisis management and center policies/procedures. They are professionals who have been specifically selected to provide high quality care for the children who attend our center. No staff member is permitted to knowingly alter or reject a center procedure/policy without expressed consent by the director. Additionally, Minding Miracles staff are not permitted to babysit, transport, or provide any services to Minding Miracles clientele on a private basis. In the event that your relationship (family member, family friend, babysitter, etc.) with an existing staff member preceded your child's enrollment please inform the center manager, in writing, prior to enrollment.

INCLEMENT WEATHER POLICY

In the event of inclement weather, Minding Miracles Learning Center will make every attempt to open as usual. However, to preserve the safety of our staff and children we will close if conditions warrant such action. It is at the discretion of the center's administration to make the decision to close the center, implement early dismissal or open later due to natural disasters (i.e. Snow, ice, or other unsafe driving conditions).

For center closure or delayed-opening, families will be notified of the decision, prior to 5:00 am, via Brightwheel message. In the event of an early dismissal, parents will be notified through Brightwheel; however, parents who do not respond to the Brightwheel message will receive a

personal phone call. In the event that you will not be able to pick-up your child during such an event, please be sure to have alternate arrangements available.

CHILD RELEASE & SECURITY

Upon registration, you will be asked to fill out a 'child release form,' depicting family members or friends who you give permission to pick up your child. Please be sure to include all emergency contacts on this form. Photo I.D. is required and kept on file for anyone who is authorized to pick up your child. In the event that a specified designee will be a consistent pick-up person, that individual may be added to the check-in/out system in order to expedite your child's release on a daily basis.

A photo and description of any individual whom has restricted access to your child should be kept on file at the center. If applicable, any custody arrangement or other documentation restricting access to your child must also be kept on file. In the event that an individual who has been restricted through official legal documentation shows up at the center, the local police and parent will be called immediately. Minding Miracles staff CANNOT restrict access to a parent or guardian without court documentation stating the restriction.

PARKING

The parking lots in each of our centers have limited spaces. Each of the centers has a designated loading zone where parents can park while dropping off or picking up their child. Please ask the manager of your child's center for instructions as to the parking route. We also ask that you not leave car motors running or leave other children unattended within your car when you enter the building. Additionally, please pull all the way up and be mindful of other vehicles passing. Please do not park in staff allotted parking spots during pick-up and drop-off.

PERSONAL BELONGINGS AND SHOW & TELL

All personal items that are brought to school should be marked with your child's name or initials. This will alleviate the potential of lost or misplaced items. Food items that need to be stored in the center's refrigerator should also be marked with your child's name. All bottles and sippy-cups must be marked with the child's name and the date that it was prepared.

On the first few days of school, a stuffed animal or doll may ease the transition from home and comfort your child when feeling anxious; please be sure these items are labeled and will fit in your child's backpack or cubby. A book or cultural artifact to share with the whole class is always welcome, but should be communicated to your child's teacher. It is recommended that other toys be left in the car or at home, so as not to be lost, broken or envied by others. Notification about "Show & Tell" opportunities will be included on the class Brightwheel feed. We ask that, when sending toys to school, parents use good judgment in terms of the appropriateness of the item in the school environment. Items that promote violence or could

CLOTHING

Children play hard and need to be comfortable. We ask that children be dressed in clothes suitable for the many art, playground and climbing activities of their day. Cold weather does not necessarily keep us indoors, so please be sure that children have the necessary clothing and accessories appropriate for the day's weather changes. All extraneous clothing should be labeled with the family's name, to facilitate dressing and reduce loss.

A full set of clothing (shirt, pants, undergarments, and socks) should be kept in your child's school cubby or backpack. When accidents of play, feeding or toileting happen, we know you would want your child to be comfortable. Extra sets will need to be regularly replaced as soon as possible if your child uses them, or as appropriate through seasonal weather changes.

Shoes need to be appropriate for indoor/outdoor play. Snow boots, for health reasons, need to be replaced with indoor shoes. Sneakers or rubber-soled shoes are required for safe play; an extra pair may be left in the child's backpack and teachers will gladly help with the changes.

REST TIME PROVISIONS

Parents are responsible for providing and laundering (weekly) towels, bibs, blankets and crib sheets. Sheets and blankets need to be taken home at the end of each week to be laundered. Cribs and cots are provided for your child's rest time. They are sanitized after each use. Children in the Infant Room will nap according to their personal schedules. The remaining classrooms will have rest time at a designated time in their given schedules. However, if your child typically requires a nap at differing times, every attempt will be made to accommodate their personal schedule. State regulations require that EVERY child under the age of four must have the opportunity for rest time when enrolled at the center for full days. Children who do not usually require a nap will be allowed to engage in a quiet time activity, away from their cot, after 30-minutes of rest.

SCHOOL ABSENCES, COMMUNICABLE ILLNESS & NOTIFICATION

It is our first priority to maintain the health and wellness of all of our students and staff. In the event that your child exhibits any of the symptoms listed below, he/she should not attend the center. If your child begins to exhibit any of these symptoms while in school, your child will be separated from the group and you will be contacted to pick him/her up.

In the event that your child is exposed to a communicable illness while at the center, you will be notified through a Brightwheel notification.

The following symptoms are considered a risk of communicable illness:

- Severe pain or discomfort
- Diarrhea
- Vomiting
- Elevated temperature of 101.5 degrees Fahrenheit
- Yellow eyes or jaundice skin
- Red eyes with or without discharge
- Infected or irritated skin patches
- Difficult or rapid breathing
- Skin lesions
- Swollen glands or red irritated throat/strep throat
- Visibly enlarged lymph nodes
- Stiff Neck
- Blood in urine
- Cloudy or colored nasal discharge
- Excessive cough

Once your child is symptom free for at least **twenty-four hours**, he/she may return to the center. However, a doctor's note may be required for return to school if the child has any of the following illnesses:

- Whooping Cough
- Mumps
- Hepatitis A
- German Measles
- Chicken Pox
- Influenza
- Measles
- Meningococcus
- Tuberculosis
- Giardia Lamblia
- Salmonella
- Shigella
- Impetigo
- Lice
- Scabies

If your child becomes ill while at the center, we will call you; if you cannot be reached your emergency contacts will be notified and asked to pick up your child. Please ensure that emergency contacts are aware that they have been listed on your emergency contact list. Please be sure to notify us if your work phone number changes, so that you are most efficiently reached. Children with contagious illnesses need to be picked up as soon as possible and no longer than one-hour after parent contact. Your cooperation in this matter is vital to keeping

our children healthy. Thank you for your help in creating a healthy, safe, & fun learning environment!

***Please note that giving a child fever-reducing or symptom-hiding medications in an attempt to prevent exclusion is absolutely prohibited and can result in expulsion. Any parent who knowingly deceives MM staff and exposes other students to communicable illness will have enrollment terminated.*

REPORTABLE ILLNESSES

Some childhood illnesses are required, by law, to be reported to our local health agency. In the case of a contagious illness in your child's class, we will post a notice with information regarding possible exposure and symptoms. Please report any communicable illness of your child(ren) to management immediately in order to allow us to properly implement this policy.

ORAL HYGEINE POLICY

Oral hygiene ties closely with a child's overall health & wellness. We strive to make oral health an organic part of our curriculum by discussing food choices and practices that lead to oral health. We encourage parents to follow the American Academy of Pediatric Dentistry recommendations to:

- Utilize oral health consultation, preferably by a pediatric dentist, *at least* once a year and as needed.
- Promote establishment of a dental home no later than 12 months of age of the child.
- Promote and model oral health routines such as brushing teeth twice daily, using mouth wash, flossing and avoiding sugary foods/drinks.
- Provide the child with clean, optimally fluorinated drinking water throughout the day.

Recommendations for a pediatric dentist can be found via the link on our website or at:
<https://www.aapd.org/publications/find-a-pd/?advancedOptions=true>

MEDICATION ADMINISTRATION

The following guiding principles and procedures have been developed in accordance with the Manual of Requirements from the DCFS and apply to administration of medication for children while at the center:

1. Whenever possible, it is best that medication be given at home. Dosing of medication can frequently be done so that the child receives medication prior to going to childcare, and again when returning home and/or at bedtime. The parent/guardian is encouraged to discuss this possibility with the child's health care provider.
2. The first dose of any medication should always be given at home and with sufficient time before the child returns to the center to observe the child's response to the medication given. When a child is ill due to a communicable disease that requires medication as treatment, the health care

provider may require that the child be on a particular medication for 24 hours before returning to childcare. This is for the protection of the child who is ill as well as the other children in childcare.

3. Medication will only be given when ordered by the child's health care provider and with written consent of the child's parent/legal guardian. A "Permission to Give Medication in Childcare" form can be attained at the center and will hereafter be referred to as Permission Form. All information on the Permission Form must be completed before the medication can be given. Copies of this form can be duplicated or requested from the childcare provider.
4. "As needed" medications may be given only when the child's health care provider completes a Permission Form that lists specific reasons and times when such medication can be given.
5. Medications given in the Center will be administered by a staff member designed by the Center Director and will have been informed of the child's health needs related to the medication and will have had training in the safe administration of medication.
6. Any prescription or over-the counter medication brought to the child care center must be specific to the child who is to receive the medication, in its original container, have a child-resistant safety cap, and be labeled with the appropriate information as follows:
 - ✓ Prescription medication must have the original pharmacist label that includes the pharmacist's phone number, the child's full name, name of the health care provider prescribing the medication, name and expiration date of the medication, the date it was prescribed or updated, and dosage, route, frequency, and any special instructions for the administration and storage. It is suggested that the parent/guardian ask the pharmacist to provide the medication in two containers, one for home and one for use in childcare.
 - ✓ Over-the-counter (OTC) medication must have the child's full name on the container, and the manufacturer's original label with dosage, route, frequency, and any special instructions for administration and storage, and expiration date must be clearly visible.
 - ✓ Any OTC without instructions for administration specific to the age of the child receiving the medication must have a completed Permission Form from the health care provider prior to being given in the childcare center.
7. Examples of over-the-counter medications that may be given include:
 - ✓ Antihistamines
 - ✓ Decongestants
 - ✓ Non-aspirin fever reducers/pain relievers
 - ✓ Cough suppressants
 - ✓ Topical ointments, such as diaper cream or sunscreen
8. All medications will be stored:
 - ✓ Inaccessible to children
 - ✓ Separate from staff or household medications
 - ✓ Under proper temperature control
9. For the child who receives a particular medication on a long-term daily basis, the staff will advise the parent/guardian one week prior to the medication needing to be refilled so that needed doses of medication are not missed.
10. Unused or expired medication will be returned to the parent/guardian when it is no longer

needed or be able to be used by the child.

11. Records of all medication given to a child are completed in ink and are signed by the staff designated to give the medication.
12. Information exchange between the parent/guardian and childcare provider about medication that a child is receiving should be shared when the child is brought to and pick-up from the Center. Parents/guardians should share with the staff any problems, observations, or suggestions that they may have in giving medication to their child at home, and likewise with the staff from the center to the parent/guardian.
13. Confidentiality related to medications and their administration will be safeguarded by the Center Director and staff. Parents/guardians may request to see/review their child's medication records maintained at the center at any time.
14. Parent/guardian will sign all necessary medication related forms that require their signature, and particularly in the case of the emergency contact form, will update the information as necessary to safeguard the health and safety of their child.
15. Parent/guardian will authorize the Director or Director Designee to contact the pharmacist or health care provider for more information about the medication the child is receiving, and will also authorize the health care provider to speak with the Director or Director's designee in the event that a situation arises that requires immediate attention to the child's health and safety particularly if the parent/guardian cannot be reached.
16. Parent/guardian will read and have an opportunity to discuss the content of this policy with the Director or Director's designee. The parent signature on this handbook is an indication that the parent accepts the guidelines and procedures listed in this policy and will follow them to safeguard the health and safety of their child.

****Please note that sending over-the-counter or prescription medication into school in any manner other than in compliance with the above policy is considered a breach in protocol. This includes sending any substance (medication, laxatives, vitamins, supplements) in your child's cup or embedded into their food.**

****Additionally, for students who take any prescription or over-the-counter medications at home, please notify our staff of the medication and possible side-effects via Brightwheel. This is for your child's safety and your convenience. Sometimes medications can create 'symptoms' that mimic communicable illness. Having knowledge of the medication will help our staff determine when it is and is not appropriate to send a child home. Additionally, in the unlikely event of a medical emergency, it is imperative that our staff be able to tell first responders if your child is on any medication.**

TRANSPORTATION/FIELD TRIPS

By signing the contract and enrollment form you are giving your child permission to be transported as needed in case of an emergency only. Permission for field trips will be requested via a separate form no more than three weeks before the trip/event.

ARRIVALS AND DEPARTURES

Once a child has been released to the care of their parent or guardian, it is assumed that the

child is henceforth in their care. We understand that, from time to time, parents engage in conversation with other parents or staff while at the center. Please keep your child in your care at during these times. Children are not permitted to run around the school grounds or parking lot. Children are also not permitted to re-enter the building or classroom- without their parents- once they have been signed out of the center's care.

INFLUENCE OF DRUGS/ALCOHOL

If you or any other person designated to pick up your child, appears to be under the influence of alcohol or drugs at the time of pick-up, you will be asked to have someone come and get you and your child. If you refuse a ride and attempt to leave with your child, we will be obligated to notify the police department and child protection services with all information required.

TECHNOLOGY POLICY

From time to time, Minding Miracles may choose to use technological mediums during your child's school day. The content that will be used is relevant to the theme, concept or occasion that is part of your child's curriculum. All technology, including video programs, computer games, or apps have been carefully selected for age appropriateness and will be limited to 30 minutes per day.

Please keep in mind that, although videos and computer technology are going to be an important part of your child's school program in the years ahead, they comprise only a small percentage of the varied learning/teaching techniques that we use at Minding Miracles. We encourage you to discuss any questions or concerns that you may have about the use of technology or our selection techniques with us. Children under the age of two will not be exposed to technological mediums (tv, videos, tablets) during their school day.

By signing that you received this handbook you consent to allowing your child to partake in technological learning while at Minding Miracles. This may include the use of DVD/VHS screenings, iPad applications, computer programs, or SMART board software. If you choose to have your child excluded from these activities, you may make a note on the bottom of the signature page. Children under the age of two-years-old will not be exposed to such mediums.

SOCIAL MEDIA POLICY

This social media policy applies to parents, members of staff, students, and volunteers at Minding Miracles. As part of our duty to safeguard children it is essential to maintain the privacy and security of all our families. Therefore, we require that no photographs taken within the childcare setting or at special events and outings with the children are to be posted for public viewing, except those **of your own child**.

Parents are advised that they do not have a right to photograph anyone else's child or to upload photos of anyone else's children. Photos and videos posted as a part of Minding Miracles' parent inclusion program (i.e. learning displays or Brightwheel journals) are for parent viewing only and may not be shared by parents if they include children other than their own.

This policy includes (but is not limited to) the following technologies:

- Social networking sites (e.g. TikTok, Facebook, Instagram, Snap Chat, etc)
- Blogs • Discussion forums • Collaborative online spaces
- Media Sharing services (i.e. You Tube) • Micro-blogging (i.e. Twitter)

DISCIPLINE

Minding Miracles' philosophical standpoint on discipline stands in the belief that young children require positive behavior supports and consistency to learn socially appropriate behavior. Supporting children through conflict resolution and problem-solving techniques promotes long-lasting behavior change. The following list of acceptable and unacceptable discipline techniques have been adopted as our general discipline policy. For children with extreme behaviors, that threaten the safety of the child or others, a child-specific plan may be developed with the help of school administration and the child's parents.

Acceptable forms of discipline:

Positive Behavior Supports- PBS plans are naturally instituted into all Minding Miracles classrooms. These supports give guidance to assist children in making positive choices and developing appropriate behavior. Specific methods such as a 'clip up program,' picture schedule, or antecedent interference are used as structures to promote positive behavior.

Positive reinforcement- The most effective means of molding a child's behavior is to reward desirable behaviors as they appear. Telling a child what it is that they are doing right as opposed to scolding the child when they are breaking rules proves much more effective.

Redirection- When a child is engaging in an undesirable behavior, redirect their actions by giving them an alternative means to conduct themselves. Address the behavior as a communication of some sort; be it anger, confusion, sadness or frustration. Giving the child an alternative action to express these feeling decreases the possibility of the behavior reoccurring.

Reminder- Remind the child of the rules. Paying attention to a possible situation where rules may be broken and simply letting the child know that you see what is going on and reminding them of appropriate behavior may prevent a situation from escalating to a point where rules are being broken.

Removal- In the event that a child has deliberately broken a rule and put him/herself or another child in danger, removing the child from the group may be appropriate. The child must be supervised when removed and may only be removed for an appropriate amount of time. The instructor should briefly explain to the child why they are being removed from group; however, no other engagement of the child should exist for the duration of the removal. Before allowing

the child to re-enter the group, briefly discuss the problem and alternative solutions.

***Any form of discipline aside from the ones explained above is not aloud unless first discussed and agreed upon with the child's parents and designated in a signed behavior plan. Furthermore, there are several forms of discipline that staff members are strictly prohibited from using.*

They are explained as follows:

Unacceptable forms of discipline:

Singling out- No child may be singled out and scolded for a behavior that others were also engaged in. All attempts of discipline must be fair and applied to all children equally.

Assumption- In the event that the instructor did not see the actual behavior occur, no child may be assumed responsible. Even when pointed out by another child, the instructor should simply re-establish the rules and go on with the activity.

Deprivation- No child may be deprived of lunch, snack, rest time or beverage because of their behavior. Furthermore, the threat of such deprivation is also prohibited

Physical Contact- Under no circumstances is any staff member permitted to discipline a child in a physical or physically threatening manner.

EXPULSION POLICY

It is the intention of Minding Miracles Learning Center to provide parents and their children with impeccable care and service. We truly believe in the uniqueness of children and will make every attempt to provide both parents and students with a safe, fulfilling learning environment. The decision of expulsion will only be made after close evaluation by staff and parents and every other attempt to accommodate the child has been made.

Decision for expulsion will be made without regard to race, gender, ethnicity or religion. Furthermore, no child may be expelled because of their parents' inquiry into or about the policies or procedures of the center or for requesting information from the DCF Office of Licensing about the center. The following are possible reasons we may have to expel or suspend a child from the center:

Immediate Causes for Expulsion:

The child is at risk of causing serious injury to other children or him/herself.

Parent threatens physical or intimidating actions toward staff members.

Parent exhibits verbal abuse to staff.

Potential actions calling for remediation before child's expulsion:

Failure to pay/habitual lateness in payments.

Failure to complete/submit required forms including the child's annual health screening or immunization records.

Habitual tardiness when picking up your child.

Lack of parental cooperation in developing effective behavior plans to address inappropriate/dangerous child behavior.

Verbal abuse or the use of profanity when addressing staff.

Habitual failure to comply with Minding Miracles' policies & procedures.

Schedule of Expulsion:

If, after remedial actions have not worked, the child's parent/guardian will be advised verbally and in writing about the child's or parent's behavior warranting an expulsion. Remediation notice is meant to create a period of time so that the parent/guardian may work on the situation to come to an agreement with the center.

During remediation, the following will occur: -The parent/guardian will be informed regarding the length of time of the remediation period. -The parent/guardian will be informed about the expected changes required in order for the child to return to the center. -The parent/guardian will be given an expulsion date that allows the parent sufficient time to seek alternative childcare (except in cases where immediate expulsion is warranted). The expulsion date will allow approximately one to two weeks, depending on risk to other children's welfare or safety.

MEAL PLANNING, POLICIES, AND GUIDELINES

Because of increases in allergies, dietary restrictions, and cultural food values, Minding Miracles does not provide meals. You may send your child to school with foods that need to be refrigerated and/or heated for breakfast, snack and lunch each day. Foods that are used in activities and/or celebrations will be planned by Minding Miracles' staff with the food restrictions of all students taken into consideration.

Please consider the following when planning your child's meals:

- **Minding Miracles is a 'nut-free' school.** Please do not send nuts, peanut/almond butter or any other nut products to school with your child. In the event that these items are sent to school with your child, they will not be made available to him/her and an alternative must be provided.
- If your child has specific food intolerance or allergy, or you have chosen to remove a type of food from your child's diet for any reason, please notify us in writing on your child's personal information sheet. In the case of allergies, please fill out an "Allergy Action Plan," which can be attained at the front desk from the center or on our website.
- In the event that the meals you have sent for your child have special preparation instructions, please include them in writing in your child's lunchbox. Each classroom is equipped with a refrigerator and microwave. Please alert your child's teacher upon arrival if there are items that need to be immediately refrigerated.
- When preparing meals, please take into consideration the length of time that your child will be at the center. For instance, a child who is at the center for the extended day should bring at least two healthy snacks, a balanced breakfast, lunch, and adequate beverages. Breakfast will only be made available to your child until 9am each day. If your child is going to arrive after 9am, please plan on having

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*204 Wilson Avenue * Port Monmouth, NJ, 07758 * (732)769-2722(ph) * 732-769-2343(fax)*

breakfast at home.

- Please place your child's name on any items that will need to be refrigerated or any non-disposable items.
- We understand that the preschool years can bring on many "picky eater" behaviors. If you find that your child has an increasingly self-restricted diet, and would like support in this area, please talk to your child's teacher about techniques and strategies that may be helpful.
- Please follow the following guidelines when selecting foods to send to school with your child:
 - Include at least one fruit and vegetable per meal. Avoid fruits packed in sugar-based syrup.
 - Avoid foods that are high in fat, sugar, trans fats and/or sodium.
 - We request that each child come to school with a full water bottle (with a retractable straw or cover). The water will be made available to your child throughout the day and can be refilled from our Poland Springs cooler as needed.
 - Limit 100% fruit juice to 6oz. per day and avoid all sugar-sweetened beverages. Do not provide juice to children under the age of 1.
 - Provide skim or 1% fat milk to children over the age of two.
 - Select breads and crackers with high proportion of whole-grains.
- For guidance in planning healthy meals for your child, please visit <http://www.choosemyplate.gov/preschoolers> or select the downloads section of our website, MMLCfamily.com.

BREAST FEEDING POLICY

Minding Miracles subscribes to the CDC recommendations for breast feeding infants. Therefore, we have embraced the following recommendations for promotion and encouragement of breastfeeding and infant feeding practices:

Staff Behaviors:

- Staff members will encourage and support breastfeeding mothers to continue breastfeeding.
- Caregivers/teachers should feed infants on cue unless the child's primary care provider give written instructions otherwise.
- Infants will always be held for bottle feeding.

Center Policies

- Breastfeeding mothers will have a clean, welcoming place to breastfeed or express their milk.
- A refrigerator will be made available for the storage of expressed milk. All stored breast milk must be labeled with the child's full name and the date it was expressed.
- No infant is fed the expressed human milk of another infant's mother. A mother's milk is for her child only.

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- Breastfeeding promotional materials will be displayed to encourage and support breastfeeding mothers.
- Cow's milk is not fed to children under 1 year of age.
- Formula fed infants, under 1 year of age, drink the formula recommended for them by their health care professionals.
- Formula mixed with cereal, fruit juice, or any other foods will not be served unless written instructions are provided by the child's parent or primary care provider.
- Infants are not permitted to have bottles in the crib and will not be allowed to carry a bottle while standing, walking, or running around.
- A plan to introduce age-appropriate solid foods (complementary foods) to infants will be made in consultation with the child's parent/guardian and primary care provider.

REGISTRATION POLICIES

1. Tuition for the dates and program your child is attending for the month is due on or before the first of the month.

- ↪ One month's tuition is due upon registration into a program.
- ↪ One month's notice is needed for withdrawal from any program. In order to terminate enrollment please notify management in writing. Without 30 days' notice, no refund will be provided.
- ↪ Schedule changes made after the annual cut-off date will incur a \$50 fee.

2. For your convenience, it is our policy to allot one week's vacation credit, per student, per calendar year.

- ↪ Vacation dates must be reported via our website before the invoices for the vacation month are issued (example- report by March 15th for a vacation credit in April).
- ↪ In the event that you are taking more than one week's vacation, please notify us in writing of the dates your child will be absent. No credit will be given for more than one week's absence per school year (August 1-July 31).
- ↪ In the event of prolonged absence (30+ days), you may apply for a break from enrollment. If you choose to do so, the following month's tuition may be paid in order to reserve your child's spot. If you do not reserve your child's spot in the program, there is no guarantee that a placement will be available when you return for reenrollment.
- ↪ For students who will not be enrolled during summer months, September enrollment can be guaranteed by enrolling by April 1st of the previous school year and submitting a nonrefundable payment of 50% of September's tuition.

4. In the event that you will be late to pick up your child, we ask that you please call the center with your approximate time of arrival. *Parents who pick up their child more than 5 minutes late will be charged at a rate of \$25.00 per 15 minutes thereafter (for example, a parent who is 6-15 minutes late for pickup will occur a \$25 fee; 16-30 minutes= \$50 fee, etc).* Habitual lateness is grounds for expulsion.

5. Because of scheduling conflicts and time constraints, we must strictly adhere to schedule times. If you arrive late for your child's school day, that time must be subtracted from the session, unless previously approved.

6. It is our policy to issue an invoice for each student's scheduled program at the beginning of each month.

- * If, at the time of receipt of the invoice, there are dates that you are planning not to attend, you may submit the dates on our website's scheduling tab.
- * Invoices are available seven days before the due date on your Brightwheel account. Payment can be made on the app via check ACH, debit or credit card. In-person payments of cash or paper check can also be made. Credit & debit are only accepted through the Brightwheel app. Receipts & tax documents can be accessed through the Brightwheel app.
- * Credit card payments made through the Brightwheel app incur a fee which is implemented and collected by Brightwheel. This is not a Minding Miracles fee and our management has no control over it.
- * If you are unable to make payment for the full month's tuition at the beginning of the month, we will be happy to make payment arrangements that accommodate you and your family. If a payment arrangement is needed, a form must be completed, signed and approved by management. Payment arrangements that are not strictly adhered to will be considered void, and tuition will be due in full on the first of the month. Payment arrangements that are ongoing must include the completed form and must be set-up as a recurring charge (weekly, biweekly, etc) on the Brightwheel app.
- * Under no circumstances may any portion of a month's tuition be received later than the last day of that month.
- * Payments made after the 10th of the month will be assessed a late fee of 5% of the open balance & no less than \$25.00. This policy does not apply to payments made **within the designated time frame** of a signed and approved payment arrangement.
- * Checks returned for any reason will incur a \$35.00 fee.

7. If you are relying on a separate funding agency (such as Community Childcare Referrals & Resources or a Flex Spending account from your employer), it is your responsibility to abide by the documentation or procedural protocol of that agency. In the event that you do not follow the procedures or requirements that are outlined by the funding source, the tuition fees are automatically the responsibility of the parents/guardians.

8. Any court orders or custodial agreements that pertain to payment of tuition must be submitted to Minding Miracles and a copy must be kept at the center. Only one invoice will be issued for each child. Therefore, such arrangements must include an agreement between parents regarding how payment will be made & submitted. Failure on the part of one party to submit timely payment may result in expulsion even if the other party has made timely payments. It is not Minding Miracles' responsibility to enforce court orders or custody agreements regarding payment.

9. Tuition is calculated on a yearly basis and broken down into 12 equal installments based on a total number of school days. All planned holidays and closings have already been factored into

tuition costs. In the event of prolonged closure due to a public health crisis, a government sanctioned prolonged State of Emergency or Minding Miracles management decision to close for any reason (ex- building repairs, health/safety issues) for more than five consecutive days, prepaid tuition will be refunded.

HOME LANGUAGE POLICY

Minding Miracles acknowledges & celebrates the diversity of our student population. Since communication is one of the cornerstones of our program philosophy, we are committed to supporting students and their families who may have a native language other than English. Therefore, we have adopted the following policy regarding English Language Learners:

- Parents will be given the opportunity to provide Minding Miracles staff with a list of specific words and phrases in the child's home language that can be incorporated into daily interactions.
- Teachers will incorporate labels and signage in the child's home language to classroom displays.
- Teaching staff who interact daily with students who have a native language other than English will research basic instructions and key school phrases in the child's home language to be used during classroom routines.
- Whenever possible, written communication to parents will be translated into the parents' native language.
- Teaching staff will be trained to utilize an electronic application which translates verbal language in order to make face-to-face communication possible.
- Parents will be given the opportunity to invite a friend or family member who is bilingual to parent meetings/conferences to enhance school-home communication.
- Materials that incorporate a child's home language (books, signs, etc.) will be sought out and used within the classroom.
- General classroom practices, including the use of simple sign language, gestures and picture representations are used consistently to benefit all students.

ABSENTEEISM POLICY

If your child will be absent, please notify the center by phone or via BrightWheel as soon as possible. If your child is absent due to illness, please notify the office regarding their symptoms in order for our staff to properly regulate our communicable illness policy. Failure to communicate communicable illness is considered a breach of our health & safety policies and may result in expulsion. Regular tuition/fees will be charged for absences and make-up days are not permitted. This policy has been adopted because costs for staff and programs remain the same when children are absent. For prolonged absences due to health-related issues, please see our registration policies. If absence is not reported, Minding Miracles management will contact you to check-in on your child's health status.

VIRTUAL BULLETIN BOARD

We continuously update our website in order to communicate important program and community information to our parents. Please check-out our website from time to time to check out our 'Virtual Bulletin Board' and 'Helpful Links' tabs. These tabs include useful information about features of our program, community happenings, child development and family support services. Our staff pictures and bios are updated on each location's tab. Ways to submit questions/concerns, schedule changes and registration documents (calendar/health forms/medication administration/etc) can be found on our website. In addition, our parent resource manual is available on the 'Helpful links' tab. The manual features community and State resources to help with financial, social, educational, medical and recreational needs of our families. Please use this valuable resource as needed. If you have suggestions for additions to our site, please reach out to your center manager.

DOCUMENTS & SUPPLIES REQUIRED UPON REGISTRATION

In order to best serve you and your child, upon registration to Minding Miracles Learning Center please provide us with the following documentation:

- ✓ Signature page indicating receipt of and compliance with the Parent Handbook.
- ✓ Copies of your child's immunization records & complete Universal Child Health Record (must be updated every year).
- ✓ Completed Child Release, Photo Release, and Personal Information sheets.
- ✓ Indication of receipt of DYFS Information to Parents document.
- ✓ A list of any dietary restrictions, allergies, medical conditions, or medications.
- ✓ A recent, non-returnable picture of your child(ren).
- ✓ A change of clothes to be kept on-site at the center.
- ✓ A copy of your child's IEP, IFSP, or evaluations (if applicable).
- ✓ A list of any professionals that you would like us to contact in reference to your child (optional).
- ✓ For students who will be napping at the center, please send in a toddler sized sheet and bedding.
- ✓ Diapers, wipes and changing creams for children who are not toilet training.

The policies, procedures, and protocols that have been outlined herein have been developed in accordance with the Office of Licensing of the New Jersey Department of Children and Families, Grow NJ Kids, local health agencies & law enforcement, and best practice for early childhood classrooms. Compliance is vital to ensuring that Minding Miracles is managed in an efficient manner that ensures safety and optimal learning for all students in attendance.

PLEASE INITIAL & SIGN THE HANDBOOK RECEIPT PAGE LOCATED IN OUR ENROLLMENT PACKET INDICATING THAT YOU HAVE READ, UNDERSTAND AND AGREE TO THE POLICIES ENCLOSED IN THIS HANDBOOK.

