



Staff Handbook

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The Sammy Center is a 501(c)3 nonprofit
Fostering Preschool Age Children's Social Emotional Well-Being

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WELCOME

Hello. We are so glad you chose to join The Sammy Center as a staff member! The Sammy Center was created to foster preschool children's social and emotional well-being. Some children may experience stressful situations, grief, trauma, or loss, others may have an identified or unidentified diagnosis. In either situation their circumstances may affect their behavior. These behaviors make it difficult, or even impossible, to be in a typical preschool program. The Sammy Center is a special place for children, to help build them up in order for them to move through hardships and be successful. This handbook will outline the things you need to know to be an effective employee and build an understanding of the way our center operates.

MISSION STATEMENT

The Sammy Center is founded on the belief that every single child is amazing and should be given every opportunity to reach their highest potential.

VISION

We believe that a child who has experienced any hardship at a young age, such as grief, loss, or a stressful situation, may benefit from an extra level of support. Research shows that a foundation of social emotional wellbeing will pave the way for positive future outcomes. The Sammy Center is a place of equity and diversity which knows no boundaries. We are a strength's focused center and meet every child right where they are. We do this by offering; small classroom size, low teacher/child ratio, evidence based social emotional curricula and teaching how to navigate big feelings and emotions through play, awareness, self-regulation, empathy and compassion. We want to help guide every child in reaching their potential as a human. The Sammy Center wants to help build children up at a young age to help mitigate and/or help them move through hardships so they can be successful adolescents and then adults. We offer a trauma-responsive environment that promotes resilience, self-care, and healing.

NONDISCRIMINATION

Discrimination of employees is illegal and will not be tolerated based on race, color, religious creed, disability, ancestry, national origin, or gender.

STAFF AND CONTACT INFORMATION

Executive Director/Founder: Maria Soter - 801.631.2006

Teacher 1: Alicia Christ - 801.548.6888

Teacher 2: Noelle Margetts - 801.735.2075

Teacher 3: Grace Chapman - 801.875.0695

Teacher 4: N/A

ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

Staff must have the following:

- Bachelor's degree in Early Childhood Education, Social Work, or related field (or in process)
- 2+ years of experience lead teaching in the classroom
- Knowledge and competence in Positive Guidance Strategies, Trauma Responsive Practices, and Developmentally Appropriate Practice

Staff role:

- Manage, along with co-teacher(s), a mixed-aged (3–5-year-old) classroom of 12 to 16 children by implementing positive guidance strategies, developmentally appropriate practices, and trauma responsive practices.
- Create and implement weekly lesson plans based on inquiry and needs of the children.
- Respond to children's needs, including physical, cognitive, and social/emotional in a timely and appropriate manner.
- Create and maintain a safe, responsive, caring, positive and fun environment for the children where they can grow and learn based on their own needs.

- Work closely with a team of professionals to collaborate, discuss and support children and families.
- Attend regular training to deepen knowledge of trauma informed practices.

Staff must be willing to obtain or already possess:

- A background check, criminal history check, and fingerprints (if needed).
- Current food-handlers permit.
- CPR and First Aid Training.
- Child Abuse Prevention Training.
- Training on the Ages and Stages Questionnaire-Social/Emotional Developmental Screening.
- Training on the Utah Pyramid Model Certification.
- 2.5 pre service training on the Child Care Center Licensing Rules and Regulations.

CHILD CARE CENTER LICENSING REQUIREMENTS AND ANNUAL TRAINING

The Sammy Center (TSC) is a licensed child care facility within the state of Utah, and all staff of TSC must understand and abide by the licensing regulations.

Annual training on the requirements includes at least the following topics: (a) current department rule Sections R381-100-7 through R381-100-24; and (b) each topic listed in Subsections R381-100-7(16)(a) through (o). These can be found at: <https://childcarelicensing.utah.gov/child-care-providers/rules-and-requirements/>

CONFIDENTIALITY

The Sammy Center strives to protect everyone's right of privacy. As staff at The Sammy Center you may hear or discuss sensitive information about the children. It is your responsibility to maintain confidentiality. Do not share names of children or parents with those outside of the program or on social media.

WORK HOURS

The Sammy Center is open throughout the year from 8:30 to 2:30 Monday through Thursday, and 8:30 to 11:30 on Friday. It is your responsibility to be at the center from 8:00 to 3:00 daily (or your scheduled hours, including Staff Meeting on Friday from 12:00 to 3:00, when scheduled). These are the only hours for which you will be paid. Below is a list of days the school will be closed.

(Fiscal Year August 15, 2024 to August 14, 2025)

Summer Break

(First full week in August)

Labor Day

(1st Monday in September)

Fall Break

(Thanksgiving Day and the day after)

Winter Break

(Christmas Eve through Jan 1st)

Martin Luther King Day

(3rd Monday in January)

Presidents Day

(3rd Monday in February)

Spring Break

(Based on Granite School District calendar)

Memorial Day

(Last Monday in May)

Juneteenth

(June 19th)

Independence Day

(July 4th and July 5th if they fall on a business days during the week)

Pioneer Day

(July 24th)

PAID TIME OFF

Staff receive 20 days of paid time off, starting after being employed for 90 days. These days may be taken as personal days when the school is open, or on days when the school is closed. A maximum of five consecutive paid days may be taken at one time. Staff members must notify the Executive Director request paid time off prior to the following pay period.

PUNCTUALITY AND ATTENDANCE

Staff members are expected to arrive on time and stay the duration of their shift. If a staff member is unable to come in for their shift or will be late they are required to notify the Executive Director immediately via call or text.

PAYROLL

Payroll is set up at onboarding through our payroll company; Paylogics. Staff members will receive an invitation for the onboarding procedure and will be expected to set up direct deposit. The pay period ends on the 15th and 30th of each month. Staff members are paid within 5 days after the pay period ends.

DRESS CODE

Children and staff are engaged in various activities during the day. Some of these activities can be messy and/or athletic in nature. Additionally, children are engaged in outdoor play daily, weather permitting. Due to these activities, staff are required to be dressed in seasonably appropriate, professional comfortable clothing. In addition, no short shorts, revealing tank tops, mid-drift shirts, miniskirts, or clothing with inappropriate labels will be allowed.

PHILOSOPHY OF LEARNING AND CURRICULUM

The Sammy Center has an inclusive and developmentally appropriate learning environment that is engaging for children, and supports the building of positive relationships. The Sammy Center adheres to a play-based approach to learning and encourages the practice of prosocial behavior of all children, regardless of individual differences, and cultural or linguistic background. The Sammy Center uses various social and emotional evidence-based curricula including the Pyramid Model Framework, Maria Montessori, Reggio Emilia, Noni and Second Step.

STAFF CONDUCT, PROFESSIONAL BOUNDARIES and EFFECTIVE PROFESSIONALISM

It is important for staff members to enjoy their work and show it. It is their responsibility to create a safe, warm, positive, welcoming environment for children, community visitors, community partners, volunteers, interns and all other staff members. It is vital that all staff members work for and strive for excellence in their interactions with others. Effective professional staff members must value collaboration and acknowledge it is important to work together with other staff members and supervisor in order to be successful. They also know it is important to have fun, laugh, celebrate success and acknowledge their efforts and efforts of others. Staff members are expected to be respectful of individual boundaries. Knowledge of boundaries includes making an effort to understand individual strengths, struggles and triggers and to be mindful and respectful.

STAFF SURVEY

Staff will be given the opportunity annually to complete a survey regarding their thoughts on The Sammy Center.

ANNUAL STAFF PERFORMANCE REVIEW

The Sammy Center staff will participate in a performance review annually. Below is a copy of the review.

 [Performance Evaluation .docx](#)

GUIDELINES FOR WORKING WITH VOLUNTEERS

The Sammy Center uses volunteers and interns on a daily basis to reduce the adult to child ratio, and allow paid staff to work with children who are in need of additional support. Below are the guidelines given to volunteers:

1. **The teachers and administrators are the experts on the children at The Sammy Center**, and their direction regarding the children should be followed at all times.
2. If a child has minor difficulty you may use positive guidance techniques such as redirection or choices to help the child regain composure. If the child begins to exhibit more challenging behavior, get a teacher or administrator to deal with the child. **It is never your role or responsibility to discipline a child physically or verbally.**
3. It is the **responsibility of the staff to talk to parents about the children.** Do not talk to the parents beyond friendly greetings.
4. If children approach you and want a hug or to sit on your lap that is okay.
5. Your interactions with the children are helping them to develop social and emotional skills. When children are showing challenging behaviors, it is sometimes difficult to remain positive. If you need a break during your volunteer shift please let one of the staff know. **Being positive and nurturing is the most important thing you can do to be an effective volunteer!**

PARENT COMMUNICATION

When a child is enrolled at TSC a family/staff meeting is arranged typically prior to the child's start date. This is an opportunity for the families to get to know the staff. It is also a time for the staff to get to know the families, learn about their culture, traditions, home environment, strengths of the child, challenges etc. Staff are encouraged to ask questions and interact with the families at this time. Staff will interact with family members at arrival and departure. These interactions should be warm, friendly and brief. Conversations should be kept to a minimum and simply such as "hello" and "good day". This is not the time for conversations about the children. Questions asked about the children and their day should be responded to with; "look for a message in Himama," or "I'll have the Executive Director reach out to you". This is also an expectation that is conveyed to families at onboarding.

PROGRAM EXPECTATIONS FOR STAFF AND PARENTS

The following are general expectations given to parents. Staff members are expected to know and follow these expectations as well.

FOOD

Children will bring a lunch labeled with the child's name and stored in the fridge or on a shelf. Water will be available for children throughout the day. Teachers will assist the children with their lunches.

ALLERGIES

Parents are required to disclose information detailing any allergies, food or otherwise, from which their child suffers, at the time of enrollment or when the allergy is discovered. Parents who have children with allergies must also sign a "Release and Waiver of Liability for Administering Emergency Treatment to Children with Severe Allergies" form. Any medication required to treat an allergic reaction must be provided in accordance with the Medication Policy.

DISPENSING MEDICATION

TSC will only dispense over the counter and/or prescription medication that is in its original, labeled containers, and is accompanied by a doctor's note with explicit dosage and administration instructions. Parents are required to submit a completed Medication Form before medication is dispensed. Medication will be stored in a locked area, out of the reach of children.

ARRIVAL PROCEDURE

Arrival time is 8:30 a.m. unless special arrangements have been made. TSC staff will sign each child into our HIMama app upon arrival. Family members will use the parking drive east of the building to pull up to the back of the school. Family members will pull up directly in front of the back door stairs and white railing and turn the vehicle off. A staff member will be present to receive the child. Family members may stand next to their vehicle to assist the child out of the vehicle. Family members are discouraged from coming into the school at this time due to special support for children with challenging behaviors that often occur during transitions. For the safety of the children, drop-off should move quickly and discussions with staff should be held to a minimum. Should a family

member feel it necessary to have an in-depth discussion or meeting with a staff member, request a meeting through the HiMama app. and or communicate through the app.

PICK-UP PROCEDURE

Pick-up time is 2:30 Monday through Thursday, and 11:30 on Friday, unless other arrangements have been made. Family members will use the parking drive east of the building to pull up to the back of the school. Family members will pull up directly in front of the back door stairs and white railing and turn the vehicle off. Child will be brought out to the vehicle by a staff member. Family members may stand next to their vehicle to assist the child into the vehicle. Family members are discouraged from coming into the school at this time due to special support for children with challenging behaviors that often occur during transitions. Child will have a backpack, lunch box, etc. Once a child is in the care of a family member they are then solely responsible for supervising the child while on school premises. Children must be safely secured in a vehicle before exiting school premises. For the safety of the children, pick-up should move quickly and discussions with staff should be held to a minimum. Should a family member feel it necessary to have an in-depth discussion or meeting with a staff member, request a meeting through the HiMama app. and or communicate through the app.

EMERGENCY/ALTERNATE PICK-UP ARRANGEMENTS

At enrollment, parents will complete Emergency/Alternate Pick-Up information. Parents are encouraged to include all persons who, during events, may at one time be asked to pick-up their child from TSC. In an emergency the child's parents will be called first. If they cannot be

reached staff will call the persons listed on this form until someone can be reached. Should the staff contact a parent, and the parent is unable to pick up the child, it is then the responsibility of the parent to arrange for their child to be picked up by someone on the emergency list.

The persons on the Emergency/Alternate pick-up form will be required to provide photo identification. There will be no exceptions to this rule. All changes and/or additions to the Emergency/Alternate Pick-Up form must be made in writing and be dated and signed. Only custodial parents have the right to make changes or additions to this form.

If there is a natural disaster, such as a fire in the building, the children will be taken to 1530 E. 3300 S. (one street east of The Sammy Center) near the corner. Children can be picked up there.

LATE PICK-UP

Our program has two sessions, one ends at 11:30am and one ends at 2:30pm. Family members who pick-up children after this time will be charged \$1.00 per minute, to be paid in cash at the time of pick-up. If payment in cash is not possible, it is to be paid at drop-off the following program day. If balance is not paid, payment will be combined with tuition payment.

PARENTS RIGHT TO IMMEDIATE ACCESS

Parents of a child in our care are entitled to immediate access, without prior notice, to their child whenever they are in care at TSC. In cases where the child is the subject of a court order (e.g., Custody Order, Restraining Order, or Protection from Abuse Order), TSC must be provided with a certified copy of the most recent order and all amendments

thereto. The orders of the court will be strictly followed. In the absence of a court order on file, both parents shall be afforded equal access to their child as stipulated by law. TSC cannot, without a court order, limit the access of one parent by request of the other parent, regardless of the reason. If a situation presents itself where one parent does not want the other parent to have access to their child, it is suggested that the parent keep the child with them until a court order is issued, since our rights to retain your child are secondary to the other parent's right to immediate access. Staff will contact the local police should a conflict arise. Visitors are asked to schedule appointments with the Director and are allowed in the facility only at their discretion. A staff member will always accompany visitors throughout the center.

COMMUNICABLE DISEASES

Children should not come to school if the following symptoms are present:

- Fever of 100 degrees or above (within the past 24 hours).
- Needs fever-reducing medication to maintain a normal body temperature.
- Vomiting for any reason.
- Diarrhea.
- Chronic cough.
- Excessive mucus coming from nasal passages, mouth, or eyes.
- Needs cold medicine to suppress sneezing, coughing, or runny nose.
- Has an unexplained rash which has not been treated by a doctor.
- Any other symptoms of communicable disease.

When a child is prescribed antibiotics by a doctor, parents must wait 24 hours after the first dose of medication before sending the child to school.

Parents are required to pick up an ill child within 45 minutes of notification by phone. If a parent is reached, but cannot pick their child up within 45 minutes, it becomes the parent's responsibility to arrange for alternate pick up with someone listed on the child's emergency contact form. Children will be excluded from participation in the program if they exhibit symptoms of any communicable disease. They will not be permitted to return to the program until they are no longer contagious. Guidelines for determining the contagious period for a specific illness are based on the recommendations by the American Academy of Pediatrics. Children must present a doctor's note stating they are no longer contagious and can return to the program.

TSC reserves the right to refuse to allow a child to return if staff believes the child to be too ill to participate in the program.

If your child will be absent due to illness, we request that you notify the center director. This enables our faculty to keep track of any illnesses, which may occur at our school. This information will only be shared with faculty on a "need to know" basis. If your child has a communicable disease, we ask that you share the diagnosis with the center director, so that the parents of the children in the school may be notified that a communicable disease is present. Once again, only the communicable disease information will be shared. We will take all measures necessary to protect your child's confidentiality. You are not required to disclose this information by law, and your continued enrollment will not be based whatsoever on your decision to share, (or not) the reason for your child's absence from school.

COVID-19

The Sammy Center will use the current Operational Guidance for Early Care and Education Programs to Support Safe In-Person Learning (Updated 2023, Center for Disease Control and Development).

BAND AID AND ACCIDENT REPORTS

Should your child sustain a minor injury during the school day, a staff member will complete a Band-Aid Report. The Band-Aid Report will be entered in the HiMama app. If your child sustains a more serious injury, requiring medical attention, a staff member will complete an accident report. The parent will receive a copy of the Accident report when the child is picked up, and the parent will need to sign the form.

EMERGENCY CLOSING AND INCLEMENT WEATHER

If Granite District is closed or declares a delayed opening due to inclement weather, TSC will also be closed or delayed.

If TSC must close during the day, staff will attempt to reach the child's parents first to arrange for pick up. Should the staff be unable to reach the parents, the persons listed on the emergency contact form will be called until pick up arrangements can be made. Staff will notify the parents or emergency contact person at the time of the call; of the pick-up location should the children need to be evacuated from the childcare center. If evacuated, the children will be taken to 1530 E. 3300 S. (one street east of The Sammy Center) near the corner. Children can be picked up there. Parents or emergency contact persons should report directly to the alternate location if one is given.

GUIDANCE POLICY

The Sammy Center has guidance policies to support the staff in the promotion of social/emotional competence of young children.

- Staff encourages children to respect other people, to be fair, respect property, and learn responsibility for their actions. This will be accomplished using the following techniques:
 - Planning to prevent problems; being proactive
 - Encouragement of appropriate behavior and positive reinforcement of positive behaviors
 - Validation and reflection of feelings
 - Consistent and clear community agreements and behavior limits
 - Modeling healthy social and emotional interaction
 - Involving children in problem-solving by encouraging them to ask for what they need from others and getting an adult when they need help
 - Positive guidance techniques such as giving choices and redirection
- The Sammy Center staff use gentle, passive restraint with children only when it is needed to protect children from injuring themselves or others, or to stop them from destroying property.
- The Sammy Center staff ensures that interactions with the children **never** include:
 - Negative tone, negative affect, or shaming
 - Any form of corporal punishment or any action that produces physical pain or discomfort including hitting, spanking, shaking, biting, or pinching
 - Restraining a child's movement by binding, tying, or any other form of restraint that exceeds gentle, passive restraint
 - Shouting at children or any form of emotional abuse
 - Forcing or withholding food, rest, or toileting
 - Confining a child in a closet, locked room, or other enclosure

STAFF TRAINING

Staff training is provided throughout the year. Required training includes: 20 hours of Childcare Licensing training, Teaching and Guidance Policy Training, Pyramid Model, ASQ training and any additional social emotional training.

MANDATED REPORTING OF SUSPECTED CHILD ABUSE

Under the Child Protective Services Act, mandated reporters are required to report any suspicion of abuse or neglect to the appropriate authorities. The employees of The Sammy Center are considered mandated reporters, under this law, and are not required to discuss their suspicions with parents prior to reporting the matter to the appropriate authorities, nor are they required to investigate the cause of any suspicious marks, behavior, or condition prior to making a report. Under the Act, mandated reporters can be held criminally responsible if they fail to report suspected abuse or neglect. We take this responsibility very seriously and will make all warranted reports to the appropriate authorities.

The Child Protective Services Act is designed to protect the welfare and best interest of all children. As mandated reporters, staff cannot be held liable for reports made to Child Protective Services which are determined to be unfounded, provided the report was made in "good faith." Causes for reporting suspected child abuse or neglect include, but are not limited to:

- Unusual bruising, marks, or cuts on the child's body
- Severe verbal reprimands
- Improper clothing relating to size, cleanliness, season
- Transporting a child without appropriate child restraints (car seats, seat belts, etc.)
- Dropping off or picking up a child while under the influence of illegal drugs or alcohol
- Failure to attend to the special needs of a disabled child
- Children who exhibit behavior consistent with an abusive situation

SAFETY

- It is our primary responsibility to keep the children, staff, and families of The Sammy Center safe at all times. Weapons of any kind, including knives or other sharp objects, and guns (including toy guns) are not allowed on the school premises. Please check your children's backpacks before they come to school to ensure that there are no weapons. If a weapon comes to school, we will require an immediate face-to-face meeting to discuss next steps.
- Respectful communication at The Sammy Center is a community agreement. This includes communications between staff and family members. If a conflict arises between the staff and a family member, conversations will need to take place away from the children, and it is the expectation that communications will be civil.

SECURITY CAMERAS

Cameras are located in the work room, the gathering room and in the cubby room. Cameras are intended for the safety of the staff as well as the children. Cameras are on at all times and may be viewed by the Executive Director at any time. During enrollment tours, families may want to view their child from the cameras during their assessment play visit.

GRIEVANCE PROCEDURE

The Sammy Center grievance procedure is a formal way for staff members to raise a problem or complaint to the program. The staff member can raise a grievance if they feel raising it informally has not worked, or they do not wish it dealt with informally. Step 1 – Raise the issue formally with a grievance letter to the program Executive Director, Maria Soter. Step 2 – Maria will conduct a grievance investigation and get back to the staff member in writing regarding steps toward correcting the issue. Step 3 – If a resolution is not reached, a

grievance hearing by the Board of Directors may be requested to review the evidence, and for a decision to be made.

DISCIPLINARY ACTION AND TERMINATION OF EMPLOYMENT

The Sammy Center values joint decision making with staff members. The program believes that all decisions should support both program and staff needs and priorities, up to and including disciplinary action and termination of employment, should the need arise. There are four steps that will be followed for disciplinary action and/or termination:

1. Verbal Warning
2. Written Warning
3. Suspension
4. Termination

Staff Handbook Acknowledgement

I, _____

have received a copy of the Staff Handbook for The Sammy Center. I understand that I must read, understand, and agree to abide by the policies set forth in The Sammy Center Parent Handbook. While I understand that the Staff Handbook is neither a contract nor a legal document, I recognize that it is my responsibility to read and understand the policies, provisions, and procedures contained in the handbook.

In addition, I understand that the contents of the Staff Handbook may be subject to change. I recognize that any such revisions will supersede, modify, or eliminate the current contents of the current handbook. I understand that I will receive an updated copy of the handbook at the time of revision and will be required to sign a new statement of acknowledgement.

Moreover, I recognize that it is my responsibility to contact the Director for any questions I may have about the contents of the Staff Handbook now and in the future.

Staff Signature: _____

Date: _____