



## Parent 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 The Sammy Center for your child's preschool experience. We are a program created to foster social emotional needs of children ages 3 to 5. We are looking forward to getting to know you and your family. Please take the time to read the following policies. This handbook is meant to create a mutual understanding of the way our center operates. Feel free to contact us at any time with questions or concerns.

## **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 IN SERVICE**

Admissions, the provisions of services, and referrals of clients will be made without regard to race, color, religious creed, disability, ancestry, national origin, or gender.

## **OUR STAFF**

Executive Director: Maria Soter

Teacher 1: Alicia Christ

Teacher 2: Noelle Margetts

Teacher 3: Grace Chapman

Teacher 4:

All prospective employees, interns and volunteers are screened on a broad range of background information. The personnel selection process includes a thorough reference check, criminal history checks and fingerprints.

Staff are CPR and First Aid Certified. Ongoing training in Early Childhood Education is required and offered on a regular basis.

## **PARTICIPANT QUALIFICATIONS**

The Sammy Center is an inclusive preschool for children between the ages of 3 and 5. The Sammy Center fosters social-emotional development. At enrollment, the completion of the Ages and Stages Social Emotional Questionnaire or the ASQ-SE assessment is required to offer a baseline of where each child is developmentally, and is completed every 6 months to track a child's progress. If the team determines that a child's needs may not be best met at TSC an appropriate referral will be made. Children who are enrolled at TSC will be monitored for the first 6 to 8 weeks to determine if our program is a good fit and/or if a referral is recommended.

## **ENROLLMENT PROCEDURES**

- Call: 385.420.4991 or email: [thesammycenter@gmail.com](mailto:thesammycenter@gmail.com) to schedule a tour of our school.
- Complete an enrollment packet and ASQ-SE online.
- The director will call or email to schedule a time for the family member and child to visit the school.
- Family member(s) and child will be invited for an assessment play visit to help determine if the program is a good fit for the child.
- The Sammy Center (TSC) team and family members will have a meeting to determine if this is a good environment for the child and/or if a referral for enrollment is suggested.
- If the program is a good fit TSC and family members will continue the meeting and begin the enrollment process.

If enrollment space is not available, you will be placed on a waiting list (no payment required). If you find other care arrangements, please contact us to have your child removed from the waiting list.

Continued enrollment is contingent upon the parents' emergency contact persons' and child's adherence to the policies and procedures as outlined in this handbook including, but not limited to, timely payment of all fees and tuition. Parents are required to notify The Sammy Center (TSC) immediately, should any of the information collected at the time of enrollment or any time thereafter change.

## **CONFIDENTIALITY**

The Sammy Center strives to protect everyone's right of privacy. Confidential and sensitive information will only be shared with employees who have a "need to know" to care for your child most appropriately and safely. Confidential and sensitive information about faculty, other parents and/or children will not be shared with parents. Alternative collaboration with partnered organizations, doctors, therapists etc. will require HIPAA.

## **PAYMENT POLICY**

Tuition will be determined at the time of enrollment. All custodial parents and/or legal guardians are required to sign the last page of this parent handbook which is a binding agreement reflecting set tuition. Prior to enrollment a one-time non-refundable \$150 will be collected to hold your spot.

All tuition will be collected through our HiMama app unless other arrangements are made. If other arrangements are made; Venmo, will charge an additional \$15.00 service fee added to the tuition. If paying by check, there will be a \$40.00 fee charged for tuition checks returned by the bank. Returned tuition checks will not be re-deposited. Parents or legal guardians will be responsible for re-issuing a second check. If at any future time the bank returns a parent's check, all future tuition payments must be made by cash, certified check, or money order.

All payments are due the 1st of every month. Families are not permitted to carry balances on tuition accounts. Late payments will result in an additional fee of \$15 per week. Non-payment of tuition is grounds for dismissal from the program. However, if you anticipate difficulty with paying on time, please discuss the matter with the Director immediately. Tuition is charged based on enrollment, not based on attendance. Full tuition is due during months of holiday and summer breaks regardless of school closure. No refunds or credits will be issued for absenteeism, scheduled school holidays and school closure, child illness, or for closings due to emergency situations, inclement weather or acts of God. The Sammy Center will accept childcare subsidies from the State of Utah.

## **GRIEVANCE PROCEDURE**

The Sammy Center grievance procedure is a formal way for family members to raise a problem or complaint to the program. The family member can raise a grievance if they feel raising it informally has not worked. Step 1 – Raise the issue formally with a grievance letter to the Executive Director, Maria Soter. Step 2 – Maria will conduct a grievance investigation and get back to the family 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.

## **DISMISSAL PROCEDURE**

The Sammy Center values joint decision making with family members, and believes that all decisions should support family needs and priorities, and enhance the quality of family life, including dismissal from the program should the need arise. There is a robust provision of staff-family collaboration in dealing with challenging behaviors, including the opportunity for families to help develop and implement interventions that are aligned with family and school priorities. This is outlined in The Sammy Center Teaching and Guidance Policy and Procedures (see Appendix 1 at the end of the handbook).

In addition, The Sammy Center reserves the right to dismiss a family from the program if a family member does not comply with policies and procedures as outlined in The Sammy Center Parent Handbook.

**WITHDRAWAL PROCEDURE**

The Sammy Center requests written or verbal communication stating an expected date of exit.

**NOTIFICATION OF ABSENCE OR LATENESS**

Parents who know in advance that a child will be late or absent are required to notify the center so that we can best prepare for the day.

**TSC PROGRAM HOURS**

The Sammy Center is open Monday through Friday. Students will attend from 8:30 a.m. to 2:30 p.m. Monday through Thursday and 8:30 a.m to 11:30 a.m on Friday's (sessions and hours subject to change).



**School Closures**  
**(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 it falls on a business day during the week)

**Pioneer Day**

(July 24th)

**(note: tuition does not change based on school closure)**

## **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.

## **FOOD**

Children will bring a lunch labeled with the child's name and stored in the fridge or on a shelf. Water and milk 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.

## **DRESS CODE**

Children 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, children are required to be dressed in seasonably appropriate, comfortable clothing. Coats, hats, gloves, scarves, and winter boots must be provided in the fall and winter months. Please have an extra outfit on site.

## **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 team 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 team 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 school team 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 team 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.

### **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.

### **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 interactions
  - 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

## **PARENT/TEACHER CONFERENCES AND COMMUNICATION**

Parent/teacher conferences are scheduled twice a year and include an overview of the observations of the child while at the program. Topics will include the child's strengths, achievement of developmental milestones, and social-emotional growth in a classroom environment. Parents are welcome to request an additional conference at any time and are encouraged to communicate freely with staff and the Director through the HiMama app. Parents will receive surveys twice annually to give input on the program.

## **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. An employee will always accompany visitors throughout the center.

### **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.

## **COMMUNICABLE DISEASES**

Please do not send your child 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.

### **PHOTOS**

Photo consent form is provided at enrollment for approval of consent choice.

### **EMERGENCY CLOSING AND INCLEMENT WEATHER**

If Granit 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. Should the center need to close for an emergency, tuition will not be refunded

**PARENT HANDBOOK ACKNOWLEDGMENT**

I, \_\_\_\_\_ the parent/guardian of \_\_\_\_\_, have received a copy of the Parent 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 Parent 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 Parent 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 Parent Handbook now and in the future.

Parent/Guardian Signature: \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Set tuition is to be paid by the 1st of every month in the amount of:

\$ \_\_\_\_\_

Eligible State Subsidy: If there is an issue with state subsidy family members are required to private pay for that month until the issue is resolved. If and when the issue is resolved reimbursement will be made. In addition, if the family member is responsible to pay a state subsidy copay, it must be paid to TSC by the 1st of every month.

Parent/Guardian Signature: \_\_\_\_\_