

FIRST STEP DAY CARE, INC

Parent Handbook



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MISSION STATEMENT

First Step Day Care, Inc. is dedicated to providing affordable Day Care for the children of our community, qualified staff provides an educational and developmentally appropriate program in a nurturing environment that embraces diversity. It is our goal to work in partnership with families to help children reach their fullest potential.

First Step Day Care Inc is dedicated to providing a developmentally appropriate environment that will expand children's growth emotionally, cognitively, culturally, and physically while building loving and dependable relationships.

PROGRAM HISTORY

First Step Day Care, Inc. is a part of The NYS Network Child Care Centers founded in 1991, we were originally created to enable parents to more fully participate in the workforce and to be more engaged and productive at work. We are a not-for-profit organization based in Watertown NY that extends its services to surrounding areas. First Step Day Care, Inc. has a volunteer board of directors that sets policy and oversees the management of the program. We are dedicated to the success of each child in our care. We offer a range of services for children 6 weeks to 12 years old. Technical assistance and support for the NYS Network Child Care Centers is funded through the collective bargaining agreements between the State of New York and the public employee unions representing state employees: CSEA, PEF, UUP, NYSCOPBA, GSEU, Council 82, DC-37, and PBANYS. The Office of Employee Relations contributes on behalf of management/confidential employees.

CENTER PHILOSOPHY

The world of tomorrow depends on the children of today. Therefore, it is essential that the children develop their own unique combination of traits, skills and abilities. The environment in which children live can stimulate or stunt that potential. Consequently, it is important to provide an enriching, caring, and developmentally appropriate setting for all children.

First Step Day Care is committed to the following goals for the children:

1. Developing a positive self-concept.
2. Developing a sense of curiosity, creativity and imagination.
3. Developing the ability to interact with others in a mutually trusting and respectful way.
4. Acquiring knowledge and understanding of the world.
5. Using language to communicate effectively and to facilitate learning and thinking.
6. Acquiring basic physical skills...both gross motor and fine motor skills.
7. Developing an awareness of good health/safety practices and procedures.

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To accomplish these goals, it is critical that the teachers work closely and cooperatively with parents to provide a nurturing and stimulating environment that will foster cognitive, social, emotional, and physical development.

Handle with Care:

If your family is experiencing difficulties at home, I would like to provide additional support at school. I understand that you are not always able to share details and that's okay. If your child is coming to school after a difficult night, morning, or weekend, please text/email me "Handle with care". Nothing else will be said or asked. This will allow my staff and I to acknowledge your child may need extra time, patience or help during the day.

BOARD OF DIRECTORS

The Board of Directors is responsible for formulating all policies governing the Center and its operations. The Board of Directors ~~tries to~~ develop policies that are fair and consistent, and which allow the Center to operate in a way that is fiscally responsible. The Board realizes that in some cases, parents may find themselves in special circumstances that make customary Center policies a hardship. In such cases, parents should confer with the Director about the possibility of an exception. Decisions regarding exceptions are the responsibility of the Director acting in consultation with the Board of Directors when necessary.

PARENT INFORMATION

A parent is required to visit the Center before a child is enrolled. The first age-appropriate child on the waiting list will fill openings in the Center. At that time, the parent will meet with the Director and receive all necessary enrollment paperwork.

Upon enrollment, the parent and the child will visit the Center for a short period of time. This will familiarize the family with the Center and increase your child's comfort level with his/her future surroundings. The parent will then be asked to provide some details about the child's development. This information will be kept on file for caregivers to enable them to meet each child's individual needs. A parent handbook will be given detailing the Center's program and policies. All NYS OCFS forms will be issued, including the medical physical and immunization verification forms. All forms must be completed before the child can attend First Step Day Care Center.

Information regarding an individual child will not be discussed with anyone other than the Center's staff and/or authorized State agencies when necessary. In the event that the parent would like information released, to another party, the Center will require a written request to do so.

Please be advised that for the health and safety of our students, staff, visitors, and invitees to First Step Day Care, Inc., we have in place surveillance cameras in all of our classrooms, hallways, to keep our staff and children safe. Camera footage are NOT for parents viewing due

to the confidentiality of other students in the classroom. HOWEVER if there is an incident concerning your child OCFS/CPS will have access to view the footage.

Parent/Teacher Conferences:

Will be scheduled twice each year, however, if a concern arises, the Parent, the Teacher, and/or the Director can request a conference.

Parental involvement is necessary for the continuing success of the program. You are encouraged to visit the center at any time, this creates opportunities for increased communication between parents and our staff. Parents are encouraged to share time and talent, go on field trips, and visit the program. We welcome and invite your suggestions and participation in events and activities.

Parents must indicate to the staff the health and well-being of the child when arriving at the Center. This is critical for the health and safety of your child, it also provides staff with needed information. Infants and Toddler's daily reports will be filled out in their classroom and given to parents at the end of the day. This will give parents information about the day's activities, food consumption, successes, struggles, health issues, and the child's general mood. In addition, a monthly newsletter will be sent home with your child to keep parents informed of any new or changed policies, upcoming events, and general Center information. Menus will be distributed on the 1st day of every month. Please check your child's cubby daily.

A permission form will be kept on file in the classroom, indicating who may pick up the child. This information will also be kept in the Director's office. Children will not be released to anyone other than the custodial parents unless the parent requests, in writing, that the center may do so, Identification may be requested. In the case of separated or divorced parents, a family information form will be completed to indicate legal custody. In some cases, legal papers will be requested to indicate the custodial parent.

Only walking field trips will be arranged for the children. The Center has a comprehensive liability policy. The Center also has accident insurance for children's injuries that may occur at the Center or while on walking field trips.

ENROLLMENT

First Step Day Care Center has been established to provide quality care for all children between the ages of 6 weeks to 12 years regardless of race, color, creed, religion, national origin, or special needs. Potty training status is not a requirement for enrollment however, it is encouraged. First Step Day Care Center will make every effort to accept children with any disabling condition. If existing staff cannot meet their needs, efforts will be made to train the staff, hire additional specially trained staff, or access services available in the community. After all available resources have been exhausted; the Board of Directors and the parents will make a final decision concerning the enrollment of the child.

First Step Day Care Inc. reserves the right to terminate care for any reason.

LICENSING

The N.Y.S. Office of Children and Family Services (OCFS) licenses First Step Day Care Inc. We comply with their rules and regulations. The Center is inspected annually by the Fire Department and the Department of Health. OCFS does quarterly inspections throughout the year without notice to ensure compliance.

The License to operate the Day Care Center is posted in the office. Day Care regulations, our policy on reporting Child Abuse and Maltreatment, and our policies on behavior guidance are always available for inspection. All staff members are trained mandated reporters.

HOURS OF OPERATION AND HOLIDAYS

First Step Day Care Center is open year-round, Monday through Friday, 7:30 A.M. to 5:30 P.M. The Center will be closed on all State Holidays. If the State Office Building deems it necessary to be closed, First Step Day Care will also be closed. If a holiday falls on a Sunday, the Center will be closed on the following Monday. Parents will be notified in advance of any changes. **If your child will not be present for the day please call the center by 8am and notify the director.** First Step Day Care Inc. has an attendance cut-off time at 11:00am, this means a child who comes into our care any time after 11am will **NOT** be able to stay. If there is an emergency, please call the office and speak to the director.

UPK PROGRAM

The UPK program follows the Watertown City School District Calendar, which means when school is closed due to closures and vacations. The UPK children will also be on closure/ vacation. If there is a snow day, with no school, there is no Pre-K. If there is a 2 hours delay, Pre-K children will delay as well. If you would like your child to still attend the center at this time you will have to pay the Daycare full-time weekly rate or daily rate if applicable. **If your child is a part of the UPK program from 8:30 am-1:30 pm and needs after and/or before care First Step Day Care Inc will provide wrap-around care, we have two options, full time which will be \$180 per week, or \$36 per day.**

ARRIVAL

Parents are expected to accompany their children into the classroom. Parents should assist their child with removing outer clothing, and make sure that the child is comfortably settled into the classroom and is under the care of a teacher in charge before leaving. Please take the time to communicate any pertinent information about the child's well-being to the teacher in charge, and please remember to say goodbye.

In the event that a staff member is concerned that a child's authorized guardian may be under the influence of alcohol, drugs, or any other impairment that could deem driving dangerous, the director will be notified, and the guardian will be asked to notify alternative transportation. If this person refuses, then the police will be notified.

GOOD BYES

1. Be aware of your child's feelings! Don't pass your anxieties onto your child.
2. Be Firm! "Goodbye, I'm leaving now. I love you. Have a good day," are all good ways to say goodbye.
3. Never ask for permission to leave.
4. Be specific! Young children have a hard time grasping the concept of time. Let them know "I will be back to get you after the afternoon snack...etc."
5. Be there when you tell your child you will.
6. Use rituals and routines in your daily schedule.
7. Be consistent as possible about drop off and pick up times.
8. Let the caregiver invite the child to the group.
9. Bring a favorite huggable toy from home to look forward to being with at rest time.
10. Don't rush out the door. Plan to spend a few moments in the room with your child.

INCLEMENT WEATHER POLICY

First Step Day Care Inc. will make every effort to remain open for service, even in times of inclement weather, for the convenience of the parents who rely on us so that they may meet work or school obligations. However in the event of hazardous driving conditions exist in the county that causes the roads to be closed, travel prohibited First Step Day Care Inc. will be closed. If we have to be closed we will post the news on Class Dojo, Newzjunky, Remind, News 7 and our First Step Day Care website.

TRAINING DAYS

First Step will be having two staff development training days so staff can stay up to date with licensing regulations regarding mandatory yearly training hours. These days will be the Friday before Indigenous People's Day the center will be closed at 1 pm and Friday, April 12th, 2024 for the NYAEYC Conference the center will be closed all day.

NUTRITION/MEAL TIMES

First Step Day Care will provide the food for the children enrolled in our program. An experienced Cook develops nutritionally balanced menus in accordance with the guidelines of the Child Adult Care Food Program (CACFP). The Cook plans breakfast, lunch and an afternoon snack. Healthy food from home can be substituted on the days when your child cannot eat the meals provided.

Infants:

Parents of infants must provide a feeding schedule to the Infant staff upon enrollment. The Center will provide Iron-Fortified Formula (Member's mark Gentle Ease). You may use our formula or supply your own from home. We will provide iron-fortified infant cereals and stage I and II baby foods when your child is

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developmentally ready, this usually occurs around 4 months of age. Parents will take the lead with new food introductions due to the possibility of allergic reactions.

Infants are required to be bottle fed before they start day care, this helps the teachers and baby to have a smooth transition into daycare. If your child comes in and they are showing signs of not taking a bottle we will contact you to pick up your child and they will not be able to return until they are FULLY bottle fed. Please refrain from glass bottles, this is a safety hazard and we are not allowed to have them in our classrooms.

All infants will be fed according to their own schedule, using the guidelines given by the parent. All baby food, bottles, and breast milk must be labeled with the child's first and last name.

Breastfeeding Policy

First Step Day Care Inc is breastfeeding-friendly! The center staff conveys a positive attitude toward breastfeeding such that new mothers can return to work and continue to breastfeed their child with the encouragement of our staff. We encourage families and staff choices to breastfeed. First Step Day Care Center staff is trained about the benefits of breastfeeding for children, proper storage, preparation, and bottle feeding of breast milk to make you and your child's transition into the Infant room as smooth as possible. Breast milk and pre-filled bottles must be dated. All breast milk must have your child's first and last name as well as the date it was expressed. Frozen breast milk can be stored (frozen) here for 2 weeks. When freezing the breast milk, please lay the storage bags flat, it makes for easier storing. Un-frozen breast milk or pre-filled bottles brought in must be used within 2 days. If an infant does not drink all the contents of his/her bottle, the remaining formula/breast milk will be disposed of. This prevents the build-up of bacteria in the remaining liquid from your child's mouth. You are welcomed into the center during operation hours to breastfeed and bond with your baby. Our staff will coordinate feeding times with breastfeeding mamas. There is also a private room designated just for breastfeeding mamas who would like to nurse their little ones or pump.

The center will offer food items that are appropriate (soft) from the infant menu to the infants transitioning from baby food to center food. This happens around 8 months of age and parents are involved in the decision-making process. Baby food is still available to supplement as well. Infant staff will also work with the infants on using a sippy cup when parents tell us they are working on it at home.

Toddler

The children now sit in little chairs at a little table that is low to the ground. They are starting to drink from open-mouth cups and learning how to use their utensils properly. Toddlers will be expected to be off a baby bottle and already transition to a sippy cup. Our Staff will serve our meals family style, children will be able to serve themselves and help hand out any plates, spoons/forks, and cups. Conversations between staff and children will be encouraged during mealtimes.

Preschool/Pre-K

First Step Day Care will provide food for the children enrolled in our program. Exceptions will be made with a doctor's note if the child has food allergies or other health concerns. Milk/Juice will be offered daily. Second helpings are available of the food and drink if desired.

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Our meals are served family style. The children will develop self-help skills by learning to dish their own plates in an appropriate manner. Manners will be modeled and learned during mealtimes. Conversations between staff and children will be encouraged during mealtimes. **Preschool/Prek children will be expected to be drinking out of a straw cup/ water bottle, we will NOT accept a sippy cup in these rooms.**

Food or drink will NEVER be withheld from a child if he/she does not eat all the food on his/her plate. Force feeding of any food item is not allowed!!

FISCAL POLICIES

REGISTRATION

To register your child in the First Step Day Care Center, a non-refundable deposit is required. The deposit will be held without interest. This fee is 1 week of daycare center tuition, charged according to the room the child will be entering. This money will be applied as a "security deposit" to cover the final week of the child's attendance.

If a medical problem prevents or delays the presence of a child in the day care center, a medical statement will be required and half of the security deposit will be returned. A documented military move will also constitute a refund of half of the security deposit.

PAYMENT SCHEDULE

Payment of childcare fees is required to be paid every week. Childcare fees must be paid regardless of absence or illness, or vacations (including state/federal holidays), or emergency closures (snow or otherwise). If you can't pay for whatever reason, please see the director, and we will figure out how to move forward.

LATE PAYMENT POLICY

Two consecutive weeks of repeated delinquency in the payment of childcare fees will result in disenrollment as well as forfeiture of the security deposit. ** In extreme hardship cases, an application may be made to the Board of Directors for review.**

RETURNED CHECKS

A \$28.00 FEE WILL BE CHARGED FOR EACH RETURNED CHECK. Cash or money order may be required in the future at the discretion of the Director and/or Board of Directors.

FEE FOR LATE PICKUP

The center closes at 5:30 and closing time is strictly observed. A **\$5.00 late charge** will be made for **every minute** that his/her child is here after stated closing time. The rate for each child, if you have 2 children, it is **\$10.00/minute**. If parents are going to be late, they need to call the center. PLEASE BE SENSITIVE TO YOUR CHILD'S NEEDS & THE STAFF'S NEEDS: ARRIVE ON TIME! Give yourself ample time to come in and talk with your child's teacher and collect your child's belongings before closing time.

SIBLING DISCOUNT

Full time siblings will be enrolled at a discount of **ten percent (10%)** for the **oldest** child.

PART-TIME ENROLLMENT

All children attending the center will be considered full time for the childcare fees. A parent may choose part time attendance for a child if willing to pay full time fees. However, part time slots can be available if the parent takes a Monday, Wednesday, Friday OR Tuesday, Thursday slot, and is available only by approval of the Director. Parents will pay the daily rate of the tuition.

WITHDRAWAL NOTIFICATION

To withdraw a child currently attending First Step Day Care Inc. **a two-week notification** is required. The security deposit will then be used to cover the final week of the child's attendance. Failure to provide the two-week written notice will result in forfeiture of the security deposit.

STAFF QUALIFICATIONS AND STAFF RATIOS

First Step Day Care Center employs professional caregivers who promote the physical, intellectual, social, cultural, and emotional well-being of each child. Staff members are qualified by education, training, and experience to carry out their respective functions in administration, operation, and maintenance of the Center. The staff members are mature, in good physical and mental health, of good character, and possess suitable personal qualifications. Each staff member's background is reviewed and evaluated by the Director, the N.Y.S. Central Registry, and they must be cleared through fingerprinting denoting that they have never been reported for child abuse or any criminal wrongdoing.

When the Center is in operation an adequate number of qualified staff must be on duty to ensure the health and safety of the children in care. The Center meets the requirements of the N.Y.S. Office of Children and Family Services. A qualified substitute must be provided for an absent member of the staff. The minimum ratios of staff to children are as follows:

Minimum Staff/Child Ratios Based on Group Size

Ages

6 wks to 18 mos. (Infant)	1: 4 or 2:8
18 mos.to 36 mos. (Toddler)	1: 5 or 2:10
3 -4 years (Preschool)	1: 7 or 2:14
4-5 years (Pre-K)	1:8 or 2:16
5-12 years (SACC).	1:10 or 2:20

CHILD ABUSE AND NEGLECT

In accordance with the provisions of sections 413 and 415 of the Social Services Law, child day care staff must report any suspected incidents of child abuse or maltreatment concerning a child receiving child daycare to the Statewide Central Register of Child Abuse and Maltreatment, or cause such a report to be made when such staff

has reasonable cause to suspect that a child coming into their care in their capacity as child day care center workers is an abused or maltreated child.

Childcare providers are Mandated Reporters under NYS OCFS Daycare Regulations.

BEHAVIOR GUIDANCE

Managing children's behavior provides an opportunity for each child to develop self-control. The Center staff helps each child develop self-control and assume responsibility for their actions through use of clear and consistent rules and limits appropriate to the age and development of the child: such as, redirecting a child to an alternative activity, rewarding acceptable behavior, encouraging each child to talk about their feelings and providing an example for children by speaking and interacting with children in a positive manner.

Behavior guidance techniques:

1. Will be related to the child's actions and will be handled without prolonged delay on the part of the staff so the child is aware of the relationships between his/her actions and the consequences thereof.
2. Will not be humiliating or demeaning in any way to the child. Focus will be on understanding the rules and on positive guidance

When a child's behavior harms or is likely to result in harm to the child, others or property, or seriously disrupts or is likely to seriously disrupt group interaction, the child may be separated briefly from the group, but only for as long as is necessary for the child to regain enough self-control to rejoin the group. A staff member will always support the child. Interaction between staff members and the child will take place immediately following the group separation to guide the child toward appropriate group behavior.

Any other form of behavior guidance other than the techniques mentioned above will not be considered as acceptable methods by the Center.

If the staff has tried several forms of behavioral guidance, a parent-teacher meeting may be arranged to discuss how to best handle the challenging behaviors. We will make every effort to meet the needs of your child, and the other children enrolled. It is our job to ensure the safety and welfare of all children enrolled. If after monitoring the behaviors and there is no improvement, the Center Director has the right to terminate care at First Step Day Care.

PROGRAM DESCRIPTION

The Director will supervise and direct the childcare facility programming. Under this leadership, the staff will be trained to provide age-appropriate activities to meet the needs of each unique child in the program and provide a creative and developmentally appropriate curriculum. The teachers will provide an understanding, nurturing, and stimulating learning environment.

CURRICULUM

The curriculum will be multi-faceted, providing opportunities for the development of social and emotional skills, gross and fine motor skills, perceptual and cognitive readiness accompanied by sound health and good

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nutritional practices. Safety will be stressed. Through teacher/child interaction, children will learn language and problem-solving skills. Children will be offered a rich assortment of varied activities in order to give them the opportunity to make positive choices.

Preschool & Pre-k (UPK program) will follow a strict Creative Curriculum, the environment is set up to encourage exploration and adhere to developmentally appropriate practice. Learning is done through play as well as small and large group activities. The curriculum is tailored to the interest, needs and temperament of the individual child. In caring for children First Step Day Care Inc follows the standards outlined in the New York State Early Learning Guidelines.

SCREEN TIME

Children under the age of 3 years old **will not** have any TV or screen time. The Preschool & Pre k classroom will only be allowed TV or screen time for theme-related topics that is connected to their unit of study with no commercial advertising for a maximum of 30 minutes per week. There will be **NO** screen time during naps and or **NO** screen time during meal times.

BRUSHING TEETH

According to NYS OCFS we are required to brush the children's teeth once per day. Please make sure to bring in toothpaste and a toothbrush for your child to keep in the classroom. Every three months we will ask you to bring in new toothbrushes. If your child runs out of toothpaste, our staff will also ask you to bring in some more.

REST TIME

New York State Daycare regulations require that the Center provide a rest or quiet period where a child can lie down to rest. We try to make rest time a relaxing time when children can listen to stories, music, etc. Most children fall asleep. If your child chooses not to nap, please understand that while we do not insist that he/she fall asleep, we do require that the child play quietly, so the other children are not disturbed. The infant room is an exception as each child is on their own schedule for napping.

Each child is provided with a crib or cot for napping. We do require parents to provide a crib sheet to go over the cot. Porta-crib sheets are required for the Infant room cribs. Parents are asked to provide a small blanket labeled with your child's name and are requested to launder their child's sheet and blanket over the weekend and return it to the Center on Monday. You also have the option of leaving the sheet and blanket at the center and the staff will make sure it's washed and cleaned for children. We use ALL detergent for sensitive skin. Infants are prohibited from using pillows.

CHILD'S DAILY REPORT

At the end of the day it is helpful for parents to know what kind of day their child has had. Since it's not always possible for you to talk to your child's teachers for any length of time, we complete the daily sheets in the infant

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room. The daily sheet gives you general information about activities your child participated in and how he/she ate and slept.

COMMUNICATION

First Step Day Care, Inc. currently uses Class Dojo app to communicate with families. When your child is enrolled into the classroom the teachers or director will give you a code and a link for you to be connected directly to your phone. The director will also use Class dojo & sometimes Facebook to communicate with parents.

INFANT PROGRAM

Our goal for the infant room is to provide the babies with a nurturing, safe, and healthy environment where each infant can grow and develop at their own rate by providing the freedom to move, learn, and explore. Each infant has different needs when it comes to eating, sleeping, and playing. The staff will have knowledge of children's specific needs and routines and will develop age-appropriate individualized goals for each child. The staff will also have thorough daily communication with the parents.

The infant room will offer materials and equipment that are appropriate to each child's developmental level including but not limited to: soft areas, sensory toys, cuddly toys, age-appropriate art activities, objects to explore by mouthing, rolling, squeezing, pulling, pushing, sturdy picture books, blocks, unbreakable mirrors, and sturdy furniture. The teachers will allow the infants time for exploration through crawling, rolling, climbing, walking and using appropriate toys that provide active play.

Infants will be helped to develop a positive self-image through opportunities to succeed at simple tasks. Infants will learn to trust through the regular schedule of daily activities and the regular attendance of staff. Infants' health will be documented daily in our health check binder.

Tummy time will be given daily to children who are awake and alert, starting with a few minutes a day and working up to an hour a day. Tummy time will help by strengthening baby's neck, shoulder, and arm muscles so baby can start to sit up, crawl and eventually walk on their own.

When weather permits, infants will be taken for walks in strollers around the immediate neighborhood.

TODDLER PROGRAM

Our goal for the toddler program is to provide the children with a nurturing, safe and healthy environment where each child can grow and develop at their own rate by providing the freedom to learn, explore, and experiment. The staff will be aware of individual needs through observation, knowledge of the child's specific routine and through daily communication with parents. Toddler's health will be documented daily in our health check binder

The toddler room will have interest centers for small group activities. These centers will be as follows: sensory table, dramatic play/housekeeping area, reading area, block area, art table, manipulative area, quiet area, and an area designated for table toys and eating. There will also be a sand/water table. The focus here will be on small

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group interactions. The teacher will circulate about the room and encourage small group interactions. A few activities will be in a large group, such as music and dance, meal/snack time, outdoor play, quiet/rest time, etc. Art materials such as crayons, paints, and play dough will be available daily to provide many sensory experiences.

The staff will develop age-appropriate daily lesson plans. The daily schedule will be consistent and predictable but flexible, with constant evaluation and adjustment to accommodate the group. There will be no gender stereotyping of toys, and a concerted effort will be made to teach and demonstrate that our society is a multicultural one.

When weather permits, Toddlers will be taken for walks around the immediate neighborhood and utilize the playground.

PRESCHOOL & PRE-K PROGRAM

Our goal for the preschool room is to provide the children with a nurturing, safe, and healthy environment where each child can grow and develop at their own rate by providing the freedom to learn, explore, and experiment. The preschool staff will be flexible and understand individual needs. Preschool & Prek health will be documented daily in our health check binder

The staff will continually strive to encourage the uniqueness of the individual while also developing the child's ability to become a member of a group. Activities, stories, and music should conscientiously teach diversity, cultural awareness, and sensitivity to the needs of all groups. Encouragement will be given to the teaching of mutual respect among teachers and children.

The preschool room will have interest centers for small group activities. These centers will be as follows: dramatic play/housekeeping area, reading center/cozy corner, block center, art center, computer center, manipulatives, quiet area, and a listening center. There will also be a sand/water table. The focus here will be on small group interactions. Large group activities include music and movement, calendar, helper jobs, weather watcher, sharing time, meal/snack times, outdoor play, quiet/rest time, etc. Art materials such as crayons, paints, and play dough will be available daily to provide many sensory experiences.

The curriculum focuses on four domains of development: SOCIAL/EMOTIONAL, COGNITIVE, PHYSICAL AND LANGUAGE DEVELOPMENT. The children will learn about themselves and their environment through activities and learning centers. The children will also have opportunities to attend educational walking field trips throughout the year. Kindergarten readiness skills will be addressed as well. Staff will follow UPK Creative Curriculum to create lesson plans, the daily schedule will be consistent and predictable but flexible with constant evaluation and adjustment.

When weather permits, Preschool/Pre-k will be taken for walks around the immediate neighborhood and utilize the playground.

SACC PROGRAM

SACC will be open for students when school is closed for a week or more throughout the year, we will also have SACC available in the summertime. School age children will already have their developments, however

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the teachers will be there to assist in any reading, writing, math, spelling etc. skills the children may be lacking of. We are here to assist them in any skills they will require for school.

When weather permits, SACC will be taken for walks around the immediate neighborhood and utilize the playground.

OUTSIDE PLAY

NYS Daycare regulations require us to provide periods of daily-supervised outdoor play for all children except during inclement or extreme weather. **Please dress your child accordingly!** In the winter, you may want to leave a pair of snow pants and boots at the Center during the week. Yes, we do go outside in the Winter!! In the summer, your child will need a bathing suit, water shoes, towel and sunscreen that may be left at the Center. **Please do NOT bring your child in CROCS**, it is a tripping hazard and kids tend to run a lot, make sure your child has close toe shoes for when we have to go outside.

SUPPLIES PROVIDED BY PARENTS

Please bring the following items with your child on his/her first day. These items will remain at the Center in your child's cubby.

ALL ITEMS MUST BE LABELED WITH YOUR CHILD'S FIRST AND LAST NAME.

INFANTS

1. **A sufficient quantity of disposable diapers**, if you are using cloth diapers, a wet bag will be required.
2. Toothbrush and Toothpaste as soon as the child's first tooth pops out.
3. Baby wipes, powder, diapering ointments, sun-block (topical ointment forms must be completed)
4. Two extra sets of clothing, hat, jacket
One set of clothing for evacuation bag
5. Porta-crib sheet and a blanket for sleeping, a pacifier and a favorite stuffed animal if necessary.
6. Enough bottles for the number of feedings for the day. Bottles must be plastic, and all bottles must have caps and be labeled with your child's first and last name.
7. Formula/Breast Milk-if you are not using the center's formula.
8. Infant Tylenol/Ibuprofen, and teething ointment as needed (medication consent forms must be completed)

TODDLERS

1. A sufficient quantity of diapers, if you are using cloth diapers, a wet bag will be required.
2. Several extra sets of clothes and underwear if your child is beginning potty training.
3. Baby wipes, powder, diaper ointments, sun-block (topical ointment forms must be completed)
4. Three extra sets of clothing, hat, jacket (we go outside every day!)
One set of clothing for evacuation bag
5. Crib sheet, blanket, and or stuffed animal for sleeping.
6. Toothbrush and toothpaste

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7. 2 Water bottles (one for classroom and one for the evacuation bag.)
water bottles must be able to withstand temperature of 150 degrees.
8. Hat and sunscreen
9. Water shoes, bathing suit, and towel
10. Extra winter outer gear

***Weather permitting the children will be going outside every day. Please send the appropriate outdoor clothing and footwear with your child for the season.**

PRESCHOOL & PRE-K

1. 3 Extra sets of clothes, two for classroom and one for the evacuation bag.
2. Crib sheet, blanket, and or stuffed animal for sleeping
3. Toothbrush, toothpaste, and toothbrush travel holder
4. 2 Water bottles (one for classroom and one for the evacuation bag.)
water bottles must be able to withstand temperature of 150 degrees.
5. Hat and sunscreen (topical ointment form must be completed)
6. Water shoes, bathing suit, and towel
7. An old shirt used as a smock.
8. A supply of disposable diapers and wipes, if the child is not yet toilet trained

***Weather permitting the children will be going outside every day. Please send the appropriate outdoor clothing and footwear with you child for the season.**

***WE REQUEST YOU SEND SNEAKERS FOR OUTDOOR PLAYGROUND PLAY. SANDALS MAY BE WORN INDOORS BUT WE WOULD LIKE TO SEE SNEAKERS OUTSIDE TO PREVENT INJURY TO TOES.**

The children (toddlers through preschool) will use a variety of materials in the Center according to their age appropriateness. Activities can include painting, playdough, markers, gak, crayons, glitter, glue, scissors, paper of various styles, books, tricycles and scooters, blocks, legos, manipulatives, puzzles, and soft toys, etc. **Please do not send your child to school in something you do not want dirty. We use old T shirts while we are enjoying the various activities but occasionally it does get onto their clothing.**

FIRE AND EMERGENCY EVACUATION PLAN

Each month, all children and staff participate in a fire or emergency evacuation drill. All parents present at the time are requested to participate as instructed by the staff. Documented records of these drills are on file in the office.

In the event of a need to evacuate the Center, staff will be responsible for the children in their rooms and any additional people will help with the infants. There are two infant evacuation cribs, two in our infant room four babies will be placed in each crib. The staff in the infant room will be responsible for a crib and one staff member will be designated to get evacuation bag and book bag with binder that includes class monthly attendance records, sign in/out sheet, daily attendance sheet, and the blue information cards.

There are two emergency routes:

The primary evacuation route is going out the plaza doors (located near the kitchen); we go up to the sidewalk and turn left heading towards Academy St. We then utilize the crosswalk at the corner of Washington and Academy Streets. Cross over Washington Street and go right to the Best Western entrance.

The secondary evacuation route is leaving the Center through the plaza doors (located near the kitchen); go up the sidewalk and turning left heading towards Academy Street. We will then utilize the crosswalk and go into the First Presbyterian Church they will provide shelter and a safe place until parents are notified and all children can be picked up or we can reenter the Center or at the Church/Daycare.

EMERGENCY PLAN

In the event of an emergency, parents are contacted immediately. If we are unable to reach either parent, the emergency contact person listed in the registration packet will be notified. Each classroom and the office personnel have a set of blue emergency/information cards that accompany the evacuation bags for any drills or evacuations. Please keep the Center informed of any changes in contacts, telephone numbers, or addresses.

Blue cards must be filled out once every year.

A seriously injured or ill child will be transported to Samaritan Medical Center by ambulance, accompanied by a center employee whom your child is comfortable with, who will bring the child's health file and medical emergency card. If a parent has an emergency, please contact the Center.

In the case of a severe weather emergency, the Center will remain open unless there is a "State of Emergency." If the Center receives a call from the city police, the state police, or the building, advising the center to close, we will call the person delegated to "pick up" for that day.

Situation Requiring Medical Treatment Only

The Director, person in charge or appointed person will call 911. The Director, person in charge or appointed person will contact parents, guardian or those having legal custody. If parents or guardian are unable to be

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reached at the time of the situation requiring medical treatment, the emergency contact person identified on the emergency card will be notified. The Director, person in charge or appointed staff member will remain with the child until parents, guardians, or emergency contact person picks up the child needing medical treatment. If parents, guardian, or emergency contact person can not be reached, the Director, person in charge, or appointed staff member will accompany the child to Samaritan Medical Center in an ambulance taking with him/her the child's signed emergency authorization forms.

NON EMERGENCY FIRST AID

Cuts and scrapes are washed with mild soap and water and covered with a band-aid as necessary. Insect bites, stings and bumps are treated with a covered ice pack. Human bites are washed with soap and water, and a covered ice pack is applied. Splinters cannot be removed at the Center. The affected area will be covered with a band-aid; removal to be done at home.

MEDICAL EMERGENCIES

Parents, guardians, or those having legal custody, will be provided with emergency procedure information at the time of registration. Depending upon the severity of the situation, the following will take place:

Life Threatening Situation

The Director, or the appointed person, will call 911. The Director, person in charge or designated person will contact parents or guardians. If parents or guardians are unable to be reached at the time of the emergency, the emergency contact person identified on the emergency card will be notified. If hospitalization is required, arrangements will be made to meet the parents, guardian, or emergency contact person at the Samaritan Medical Center. If the parents, guardian, or emergency contact person does not arrive in time and hospitalization is required, the child will be accompanied in the ambulance by the Director, person in charge, or appointed staff member, who will take with him/her the child's signed emergency authorization forms.

BITING POLICY

Our program recognizes that biting is, unfortunately, not unexpected when toddlers are in group care. We are always upset when children are bitten in our program, and we recognize how upsetting it is for parents. While we feel that biting is never the right thing for toddlers to do, we know that they bite for a variety of reasons. Most of these reasons are not related to behavior problems. Our program, then, does not focus on biting. When biting occurs our three main responses are:

1. To care for and help the child who was bitten, and
2. To help the child who bit learn other more appropriate behaviors, and
3. To work with the child who bit and examine our program so the biting will stop.

Our teachers express strong disapproval of biting. They work to keep children safe and help the child who bit learn different, more appropriate behavior. When we experience ongoing biting in a toddler room, we develop a

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written plan with specific strategies, techniques, and timelines to work on the problem. This written plan is shared with the parents in the room while maintaining confidentiality.

We give immediate attention and, if necessary, first aid to children who are bitten. We offer to put ice on the bite if the child is willing. If the skin is broken, we clean the wound with soap and water. If children are bitten on top of the hands and the skin is broken, we recommend that they be seen by their pediatrician.

When children bite, their parents are informed personally and privately the same day. When children are bitten, their parents are informed personally and if requested will be given a copy of our accident form.

Biting is always documented on our standard accident report form. It is completed and signed by your child's teacher and the parent must also sign the report form. Copies of all injury/incidents are kept in the child's file.

We keep the name of the child who bit confidential. This is to avoid labeling and to give our teachers the opportunity to use their time and energy to work on stopping the biting. We have current resources on biting available to our staff and parents. We encourage parents to bring their concerns and frustrations directly to the teachers. *If we cannot meet your child's needs after using the above action, they can be referred to Early Intervention for evaluation.*

CENTER HEALTH CARE PLAN/ MEDICAL/HEALTH POLICIES

The Health Care Plan for First Step Day Care Center has been developed according to established NYS OCFS Day Care Regulations.

The purpose of the Health Care Plan is to protect the health and safety of the children and to maintain the safety of the environment. All current medical examination forms for staff and children will be kept in confidential files in the Center. They will not be disclosed to unauthorized persons. Written permission for any disclosure is required.

The Center's specific requirements for infants and toddlers, preschoolers, parents, and staff are as follows:

PERSONAL HYGIENE

Children should be brought to the center in clean clothing, dressed weather appropriate, and have a groomed appearance.

HEALTH POLICIES FOR ALL CHILDREN

1. Each child over the age of three must have received a medical examination within 90 days prior to admission by, a Physician, a Physician's asst. or a Nurse Practitioner, who will complete the health examination form or sign a written statement.
 - (a) The examining Doctor's statement will indicate:
 - (b) The child is free from contagious or communicable diseases.
 - (c) The child has received all age-appropriate immunizations, according to NYS Dept. of Health.
2. The Center must be informed when a child has been exposed to a communicable disease.

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(Please refer to the illness chart/sick child policy provided in this handbook).

3. If a child becomes ill during the day at the Center, a quiet resting area will be provided separate and apart from other children, if possible (but under close supervision) until the child is picked up.
4. Parents are required to provide the Center copies of each immunization their child has had so that our records are current at all times.
5. The Center will not administer any medications, prescription or otherwise, except upon the written order of a physician (forms provided by day care according to OCFS regulations for administering medication).
6. Medicine must be labeled and in its original container. All administrations of Medication will be recorded in a daily medical log, with the time, amount of Medication, and the signature of the staff member administering the medicine.

SICK CHILDREN

First Step will care for well children and Mildly Ill children. To ensure a healthy environment, **sick children should not attend the Center**. Please see the illness criteria below. If you are not sure, you can always call the center before bringing your child in. Your child's teacher is responsible for noting signs of illness in children under his/her care. In order to work together, the teacher will try to keep you informed of any signs of impending illness. Also, it is expected that you will inform the teaching staff of any signs of illness you see at home or if your child has been exposed to a contagious condition. If your child becomes ill at the center, we will try to keep your child separated from the other children in the classroom if possible and you will be called. Please come promptly. When you take your child to the doctor, please inform the doctor that your child attends childcare so that extra precautions may be used in determining when he/she may return after an illness. To return to the Center, you will need to bring a note from the Doctor stating your child is well and able to attend daycare. **If your child is given antibiotics for whatever reason by the doctor, please remember that they cannot return to the center until 24 hours have passed once given the antibiotics.**

Please remember to call the center by 8:00 am if your child will not be in attendance. This will help us with staffing the classrooms and for appropriate meal counts for food preparation.

ILLNESS CRITERIA/ SICK CHILD POLICY:

Purpose: The purpose of this policy is to provide guidelines regarding children/ adults/volunteers/visitors enrolled in our Center. If anyone shows signs of illness, or who may be absent due to a contagious disease.

Policy: A child, staff member, volunteer, and or visitors will be denied admission to the classroom or be isolated and/ or sent home from daycare for apparent signs of illness as outlined below.

Procedure: Each child will be observed for obvious signs of illness upon arrival at the center. If the parent is transporting their child to the center, observations for signs of illness will take place before the parent leaves the

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center. **First Step Day Care, Inc. reserves the right to not take a child into care if they look as though they are not feeling well.**

The child may return once they are symptom-free for a full 24 hour day (this means if they are sent home on a Monday they may not return to care until Wednesday without any medication). If a physician is seen, a physician's note indicating that the child is no longer contagious will be required before the child may return to the program.

The criteria for keeping your child home, or for sending him/her home from the Center are described below. It should be understood that the illness criteria serve only as a guideline.

***Positive Symptoms:**

- ***Headache, Sore throat, Cough, Rash, Fever more than 100.4 F, Inability to participate, Nasal discharge, Fatigue, Lack of appetite***

Conditions that do NOT require a doctor's note

Exclusion Policy	Return Policy
<u>Fever:</u> Temp at or above 100.4 F-orally/ear Temp at or above 100.4 F-axillary (armpit) Temp at or above 100.4 F- orally/ear with one other *positive symptom.	No fever for 24 hours <u>WITHOUT</u> medication
<u>Vomiting:</u> 2 or more incidents within a 4 hour time period.	24 hours after last incident <u>WITHOUT</u> medication
<u>Diarrhea:</u> 2 or more incidents within a 4 hour time period.	24 hours after last incident <u>WITHOUT</u> medication
<u>Multiple Symptom illness including Flu:</u> Diarrhea, vomiting, persistent cough, fever 100 with one other * positive symptom. <i>Examples:</i> 1. Child has Temp 100.4 or higher had has been vomiting. 2. Child has vomiting and diarrhea. 3. Child has persistent cough and fever 100.4 or higher.	Nausea, vomiting, and diarrhea have subsided for 24 hours or longer <u>WITHOUT</u> medication. Cough and/ or other symptom is no longer present. Fever free <u>WITHOUT</u> medication for at least 24 hours.
<u>Persistent Cough:</u> With one other *positive symptom Cough on its own if face turns blue, strong enough that the child vomits or has whoop sound.	24 hours after symptoms subside.
<u>Sore Throat:</u> Sore or reddened throat accompanied by one other * positive symptom.	Sore or reddened throat and/ or other symptom is no longer present.
<u>Chills or Profuse Sweating:</u> With one other *positive symptom (not weather related)	Chilling or profuse sweating has been absent for 24 hours or child is free of symptoms <u>WITHOUT</u> medications and able to participate in center activities.

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<u>Inability to participate:</u> Child complains of not feeling well or is unable to participate in activities and has one other *positive symptom.	Child is able to participate in center activities and free of other symptoms.
<u>Head Lice:</u> Live lice on the scalp or nits attached to the hair shafts.	Head lice treatment is complete. Head must be nit and lice free. Child will be checked for up to 10 days, if new live bugs and or nits are found again at any time during these ten days they will be sent home.
<u>Nasal Discharge:</u> Nasal discharge, which is green or dark yellow in color, accompanied by a fever.	Nasal discharge has become clear and/ or fever is not present.

Conditions that DO require a doctor's note

Exclusion Policy	Return Policy
<u>Impetigo:</u> Red, oozing open skin erosion. Some lesions may be capped with a green, yellow crust that appears to be “stuck on.”	Lesions from impetigo are no longer weeping and child has been under physician's care and treatment for 24 hours. <u>*Requires doctor's note to return.</u>
<u>Scabies:</u> Crusted, waxy ridges and tunnels in webs of fingers, hand, wrist, and trunk.	After physician's care and treatment is completed. <u>*Requires doctor's note to return.</u>
<u>Ringworm:</u> Flat, spreading ring-shaped lesion	24 hours after physicians care and ringworm treatment begins. <u>*Requires doctor's note to return.</u>
<u>Chickenpox:</u> Crops of small blisters on a red base that become cloudy and crusted in 2 to 4 days.	Chickenpox lesions are crusted. This usually occurs 5 to 6 days after on set. <u>*Requires doctor's note to return.</u>
<u>Hand, Foot and Mouth:</u> A Common children's virus causing sores in the mouth and a rash on the hands and feet symptoms include fever, sore throat, feeling unwell, irritability, and loss of appetite.	<u>Crusted over sores and NO sores inside of mouth.</u> <u>*Requires doctor's note to return.</u>
<u>Strep Throat:</u> Sore or reddened throat accompanied by a high fever. May cause headache, loss of appetite, swollen lymph nodes in the neck, abdominal pain, bad breath, and sometimes pain in the ears.	May return 24 hours after beginning antibiotic treatment if fever free <u>WITHOUT</u> the use of fever reducing medications (Tylenol/Mortin). <u>*Requires doctor's note to return.</u>
<u>Pink Eye (Conjunctivitis):</u> Red, watery eye with thick, yellowish discharge and puffy appearance to eyes.	No further discharge from eyes, under a physical's care and treatment for at least 24 hours. <u>*Requires doctor's note to return.</u>
<u>Emergency Care Or Hospitalization:</u> Child is seen at the ER or hospitalized for any sickness or injury (wounds that require glue or stitches, broken bones, sprains etc.) A note is	Must include return to school date and any physical limitations for classroom, gym, outdoor play.

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required for any surgery that a child undergoes with limitations or none.	<u>*Requires doctor's note to return.</u>
<u>Other Contagious Diseases:</u> Measles, Mumps. Hepatitis, Scarlet Fever, Whooping cough and Strep Infection. Mono- <u>*Requires doctor's note to return. Note must include any restrictions or say "no restrictions."</u>	Child has completed the contagious stage of the illness as designated by the child's health care provider. <u>*Requires doctor's note to return.</u>
<u>Rash:</u> Rash of unknown origin (not caused by medication)	Rash has been identified by a licensed health professional as not contagious or is under treatment and no longer contagious. <u>*Requires doctor's note to return.</u>

Children six months of age or older should be excluded and referred to a health professional when- ever fever is accompanied by a behavior change, stiff neck, a rash, unusual irritability, poor feeding, vomiting, or excessive crying. Fever means:

- Axillary (armpit), or aural (in the ear) temperature **100.4 degrees or higher.**

A child, who has a temperature elevation the evening before attendance at the Center, should be presumed ill and should not be brought into the Center in the morning. If the temperature is "normal" only with Ibuprofen or acetaminophen, your child is probably still sick and should not attend. Your child may return to the center 24 hours after a normal reading (without medication) provided other conditions are normal.

Until a medical evaluation allows inclusion, signs and symptoms of possible illness such as lethargy, uncontrolled coughing, persistent abdominal pain, discolored urine, refusal to eat or drink, irritability, persistent crying, difficulty breathing, wheezing or other unusual signs.

The Center cannot administer any medications, prescription or otherwise, without a written medication consent form. (forms are provided in the office). Medicine must be labeled and in its original container, All administration of medications will be recorded in a daily medical log with the time, amount of the medication, and the signature of the staff member administering the medicine.

In all cases, First Step Day Care Inc reserves the right to send a child home with suspicious or prolonged symptoms. If a child has any of the above symptoms, and, in addition, is listless, please keep your child at home because he/she may be coming down with something, which is perhaps contagious. There may be times when the Director may need to call because a child's "failure to participate" in daily activities. This may be a good sign they are coming down with something. Parents will be contacted if a child is listless and cannot keep up with the daily activities at the Center. **THESE POLICIES ARE FOR THE HEALTH & SAFETY OF ALL CHILDREN ENROLLED. PLEASE RESPECT THEM.**

PARENT RESPONSIBILITIES

1. All parents must provide the required medical documentation.
2. All parents must sign a form indicating their understanding and compliance with all current policies of the Center.
3. A completed developmental history form will be submitted at the time of enrollment to help staff understand any unique tendencies or specifics regarding each child.
4. A written pickup authorization form will be completed by the parent or legal guardian for the regular pickup of each child.
5. Because of the wide range of activities planned, it is recommended that children be dressed in washable comfortable clothing. Please do not expect your child to be clean at the end of the day.
6. Water activities, occasional bathroom accidents and messy play will necessitate the need for extra sets of clothing to be kept at the Center at all times. Extra clothing should be marked with the child's name. If wet or dry clothes are sent home, please return an extra set of clothes the next morning. Parents of children in diapers are responsible for supplying disposable diapers and disposable wipes.
7. Your child may bring a stuffed animal when adjusting to the newness of the Center for quiet/rest time. Please do not bring toys; sharing issues contributes to an additional stressor during the day.

CENTER RESPONSIBILITIES

1. All staff, interns, and volunteers must receive a physical and Mantoux Tuberculin test before beginning work at the Center, indicating they are physically and mentally fit and free from communicable disease.
2. All staff will sign a form indicating their complete understanding and compliance with all the current Center policies. All staff will attend an orientation where Center policies and procedures are discussed.
3. Center staff will be trained in basic first aid and infant/child rescue breathing.
4. An injury report form will be filled out by staff immediately following an accident involving a child. This form will be presented to the child's parent upon pickup for the parent's signature.
5. First aid kits will be readily available in the Center.
6. Staff will conduct a daily visual health check on the children to detect any health-related problems (illness, communicable diseases, abuse or neglect). Proper records will be kept of all illness, injuries and signs of abuse or neglect.
7. Toys and equipment will be disinfected daily according to the guidelines of effective infection control. Staff will be trained to do this during orientation.
8. Staff will always use proper hand-washing techniques and all children will be properly instructed on these hand-washing techniques.
9. Smoking is not permitted anywhere in the Center or on the property.

****We hope your experience here at First Step Day Care is enjoyable. If at any time you have any questions or concerns, please speak with your teachers. If your teachers are unable to assist you, please**

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come to the office and speak to the director. It is our goal to make sure you and your child's needs are being met! You can always reach us via email at: **Director.firststepdaycare@gmail.com**

Thank you for your support!