

FAMILY HANDBOOK



TOTS
ACADEMY



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TOTS ACADEMY

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WELCOME TO TOTS ACADEMY

I welcome you as part of our family. I believe that the child's first years are the foundation of their future and that these early years should be used to ensure the maximum benefit for your child's preparation for education and life. Since a child's brain from zero to five years old is like a sponge, it absorbs immediately and learns from experiences and hands-on.

I created a comfortable space with the necessary resources and activities to let their creativity and curiosity shine. The facility is arranged in areas to play, create, read, imagine, explore, and learn. Our program follows STREAMin3 curriculum focusing on the Core and STREAM skills.

Tots Academy is a Limited Liability Company, registered in July of 2021, in the Commonwealth of Virginia

Tots Academy has been granted a license as a Family Child Care Home with a maximum capacity of 12 children, ages birth to 12 years old. As a licensed facility, we operate under the standards and regulations of Licensed Family Day Home of The Code of Virginia Department of Education.

DIRECTOR/OWNER

I am Isabel Shanghai, the primary caregiver and business owner. I graduated from the University of Quito, Ecuador, with a bachelor's degree in Early Childhood Development. I am fluent in English and Spanish, and my program is designed to engage students in both languages. I have over twelve years of experience working with children from birth to six years old. During my years of experience, I have had extensive training and attended many classes to keep my knowledge up to date.

REGISTRATION & ENROLLMENT

- Registration meetings or tours will be held with the parents/guardians and child to discuss the program and determine the child's needs. These meetings will be arranged beforehand.
- To reserve a spot for your child in the program, the parents/guardians must fill out all the registration forms, pay the yearly registration fee, and pay two-week tuition. The initial two-week payments will be applied to the last two weeks of care with appropriate notice. These payments are nonrefundable for any reason.
- The following is required **PRIOR** to the child's first day of attendance:
 1. Registration Fee (yearly payment at the beginning of the school year)
 2. Tuition Fee (two weeks in advance)
 3. Completed Enrollment/Registration Forms
 4. Original and a Copy of Birth Certificate (original will be returned)
 5. Immunization Record up to date.
 6. Health Examination Record.
 7. Written authorization Forms
 8. Special instructions to the provider include but are not limited to a child's special diet, allergies, exceptions to an infant's sleeping position, or exceptions to infants being fed on demand.
 9. Signed Handbook (Agreement/Contract)

All forms and contracts must be updated annually and must be reviewed and signed by guardians before the start of each new school year. All forms can be found on our website at: <https://totsacademy.godaddysites.com/> or will be provided at the registration meeting with the initial registration package.

During the year while your child(ren) is in our care, we must be informed of any of the following changes:

- address and/or phone numbers, or e-mail address
- parent/guardian employment,
- health/immunizations up-dates, or;
- other important information related to your child.

Family Involvement

Family partnerships are essential for a child's continued successful developmental growth. I recognize that families are a child's first teachers and believe partnering with families provides children with meaningful opportunities for success and healthy social and emotional development. I will meet with parents and guardians as needed throughout the year. Whenever requested, I will discuss your children's specific needs and progress, each encounter respecting family diversity, culture, and ethnic background.

Tots Academy is a Licensed Day Home that welcomes everyone and would like to involve families in the learning process.

- During the calendar year, I will plan some family events to help us get to know one another.
- Feel free to share your family pictures and culture and join us during lunchtime and storytime (which we will be more than happy to arrange).
- If you have any feedback or want to partner with me to organize some special activities, please don't hesitate to contact me.

Daily Communication

This is a partnership, and the more families get involved, the better! Children love when their families can participate in their learning, and I want all families to be partners with me as we work together in the absolute best interest of their children. Strong and clear communication is vital to the success of early childhood development.

I know how important it is for you to feel connected to your child while they are in my program. Luckily, we are in a technologically driven society. I will use this technology to your advantage, tracking all your children's activities such as Check-in, check-out, meals they are given, at what times, activities we do throughout the day, and how we enjoy our day with your child's new friends. We will be using a daycare software, "Procare" parents download the app on their phones and can be closer to their child digitally daily. You will be able to see daily activities, photos and message us if any concerns arise. I will provide detailed instructions for you to get connected. My goal is to keep the lines of communication open with this technology while still being able to focus on my number one priority during the day - the children!



OPERATION INFORMATION

Hours of operation & schedule

Tots Academy is licensed to operate 24 hours a day. Monday through Saturday from 6:00 AM to 6:00 AM. We provide a year-round program.

However, our business hours are divided into two shifts:

- Morning Schedule: 7:00 am to 5:00 pm.
- Overnight schedule: 7:00 pm to 7:00 am

Your registration form outlines the days of the week your child(ren) will be attending my program and the drop-off and pick-up window times. It is extremely important that we respect drop-off and pick-up times to count with the personnel necessary for the number of children present when your child(ren) arrives; if the times are different on a specific day, please let me know as soon as possible. Refer to your registration form for specific information about your schedule.

Payments/Tuition Fees

Registration and Tuition fees are in the Registration Form each parent/guardian signed upon registration.

A payment invoice is automatically sent weekly every Monday and DUE on Friday. The weekly tuition is paid in advance. Full payment should be made to avoid late fees. We will do our best to create a specific payment plan if the weekly payment doesn't work for you.

Payments are made directly with the "Procare" app by credit card/bank account, as well as with cash or by check. Unfortunately, there are no refunds or discounts for days that your child doesn't attend our program. There are still costs associated with each childcare spot each day that, unfortunately, cannot be avoided if your child is not in attendance.

Any additional costs associated with field trips, summer fun, or extracurricular activities will be presented to parents through a separate newsletter/email.

Late Payments Fee

A late payment fee of \$25 per child will be charged for any late payments or returned checks. If late payments become a pattern, the family will receive communication from me, and we will aim to solve the situation together. If the late payments continue to be a pattern, I may terminate the contract at my sole discretion. The family must pay for the remainder of the invoice and any late fees that may have accrued.

Child Vacations

After six months of continuous care, we offer two weeks of vacation time with tuition of 50% off in the calendar year (must be used as a whole week). Vacation weeks do not carry over from year to year. After two weeks of vacation, you will pay full tuition. If you don't let us know at least two weeks in advance about your planned vacations, we won't be able to offer you the vacation discount.

Summer Fun

As part of our extracurricular activities, during the summer months, we have our Tots Academy Summer Fun. It is a camp filled with fun projects and activities, including water play. There is a separate one-time fee for the summer. The fee will be presented to you with the planned activities.

Missed & make-up days

If your child will not be attending due to illness or any other reason, please inform us as soon as possible and why they will not be attending. This will prevent activities from being delayed. Days missed cannot be reimbursed; we don't offer make-up days. If your child will be absent for five days or more due to vacations, please notify us at least two weeks in advance.

I try my best to accommodate schedule changes if I can do so. Please provide a requested schedule change 14 days in advance to avoid billing complications.

Please note that the scheduled care days within the week cannot be adjusted or prorated when missed. For example, a Monday/Wednesday/Friday schedule cannot change to Tuesday/Wednesday/Friday due to a child's illness or absence on Monday. Due to enrollment schedules, I cannot offer make-up days.

Holidays and closures

The parent/guardian must pay for the entire contracted time whether his/her child attends. Weekly rates are the same regardless of school closures, holidays, illnesses, weather-related closures, and vacations. Our program averages the cost of childcare throughout the entire year.

Holiday Closures: Labor Day,

Labor Day	Martin Luther King Day
Columbus Day	Presidents' Day
Veterans Day	Memorial Day
Thanksgiving	Juneteenth
Christmas	Independence Day
New Years Day	

We close during federal holidays, the day after Thanksgiving, and Independence Day. If a holiday falls on a Saturday, I reserve the right to close on the Friday before. If it falls on Sunday, I reserve the right to close on the Monday after. If it falls on a Thursday, I reserve the right to close on the Friday after.

Provider Vacations and Personal Time Off

I am a very responsible provider who always loves taking care of the children of our future, I understand that you trust our program, and I want to offer you the best service and give you peace of mind knowing that your child is in the best hands, and you can count on me to be there. But I am also a mom, wife, and human; life is unpredictable. In the event of an emergency, a substitute will provide care only until parents can be notified and come pick up their child/ren.

Tots Academy will close for two weeks (ten business days) a year as part of the provider-paid vacations. These days may be taken all at once or split up. When possible, you will be given a minimum of two weeks' notice before any closure so you can have time to arrange alternative care for that period.

Also, because we are working with exposure to many families and especially children, it is likely that we, the staff, may become ill on occasion. If the provider becomes ill and does not have adequate staff to cover, we reserve the right to close for up to (5) paid sick/personal days per calendar year. Tuition will still be required.

It is unusual, but there will be times when I must close early for personal reasons; I will communicate with plenty of time about early closures or personal days I must take. For sick or personal days when I cannot provide care, it is ultimately the parent's responsibility to find backup care.

Inclement Weather Closures

If our local public school district closes due to inclement weather-related reasons, our program may also close. I understand that parents may still have to work. I strive to open our program regardless of public-school decision to close; however, If the local or federal government offices are closing, I will evaluate the weather conditions and make a decision based on radio, TV, and internet news.

If I am going to be closed, I will contact you as soon as the decision is made. I will send out a message, an email or call the phone number provided for each family as soon as possible. The best way to receive information about a program closure is by contacting me.

If our program is open and the weather becomes unsafe, parents and guardians will be asked to pick up their children immediately.

PROCEDURES

Transitions

As a teacher and especially as a mom, I understand that transitions can be challenging for both parents and children. It can be difficult and heartbreaking to leave your child in a new environment, and it is very normal for your child to be upset when you leave. It's their way of saying, "I like spending time with you, and I love you!" Usually, during a child's first couple of drop-offs, a child may cry or seem sad or upset. All of these emotions settle down as the children move into their routine at the program. I am here to help you in this transition and give you a few suggestions to smoothly transition at the moment of the drop-off routine for both parents and children:

- Be excited for your child and talk about the positive aspects of the program on the way here and before you drop them off.
- Be consistent at drop-off/pick-up time.
- Set a simple routine for drop-off and make time to do this every day (e.g., a hug, high-five, or wave, then walk away).
- Try saying the same thing each morning to provide comfort. For example, "I am going to work now. Have a great day at school, and I will see you later," or, "enjoy school with your new friends."
- While I know it can be hard, it's best if you do not turn around and come back if you see your child crying. This can be very difficult and confusing for the child, and it doesn't make the separation any easier when the parent really has to leave.
- Give the adjustment period some time and be consistent.
- Call or text me if you leave feeling uncertain about how your child feels soon after you leave. While I'll be educating and caring for the children, I will respond as soon as I can.
- If you as a parent are struggling with this time of the day, please reach out to me directly and we can come up with a different way to manage this transition.
- When your child is transitioning from one environment to another, I acknowledge the experience and embrace it as a positive change. If your child is new to a group childcare setting, I will do everything I can to make their experience comfortable and positive. At home, you can talk to your child with excitement about the new change. I will always welcome your child with a smile and do what I can to make the morning goodbyes smooth. If your child is leaving our program to start a new one, I like to talk about the transition briefly with the whole group so that all the children in the program are aware. Each child is so unique, so I will do whatever I can to adapt our transition policies to fit your child's specific needs.

Drop-off/Pick-up

You provided drop-off and pick-up window times on the registration form. To help keep our morning routine running smoothly, please let us know if you will be out of the time frame for any reason. We want to be sure to keep food for your child or wait for an activity.

Drop-off and pick-up times are usually hectic times of the day, and we have other children in our care, so at this time, I may not be able to meet with you. If there is any concern or problem that needs to be addressed, please feel free to set up a time that is convenient for both of us to discuss these matters. Everybody is important, and I care about every single family, I would like to have open communication, and we can find a way to keep this open communication.

No one other than the parent/guardian or person listed in the enrollment form will be allowed to pick up your child. If a person is not listed in the enrollment form, please provide us written permission indicating the person's name and relationship to your child. It can be sent via email or uploaded on Procure documents. This person must present an identification matching the name provided on the written permission.

Sign-In & Sign-Out

Parents/guardians **MUST** sign in and out on the "Procure" app to record attendance at the drop-off and pick-up for legal purposes. I will also use my own record of Daily Attendance in compliance with the Standards for Licensed Family Day Home.

You acknowledge and agree that for the safety and security of your child(ren), I will refuse to release your child(ren) to anyone failing to show proper identification or whom you have not specifically authorized to me in writing.

If someone who is not authorized attempts to pick up a child, the parent(s) will be contacted immediately.

If any person arrives to pick up a child and appears to be under the influence of drugs or alcohol or appears incapacitated, we will call emergency contacts. If the incapacitated person persists in attempting to pick up the child, I will immediately call 911.

Cut-off times

Cut-off times bring a sense of order to our educational program, and it helps the children to have consistency in their day. We encourage all the children to arrive before 9:30 am. At this time, our daily circle time starts, and this is a great time to get all the children together to discuss daily activities, go

over class rules, and review vital educational skills. Furthermore, if all the children are not in attendance by our Circle time, they will miss out on a vital part of their day.

We understand there are exceptions like doctor's appointments or emergencies; if this is the case and your child will arrive after the cut-off time, please let me know as soon as possible so that I can plan according to the situation.

Late Pick-up

When the program day ends, my family time and prep for the next day begins. We understand, however, that things happen, and we are here to help you. Early drop-offs or late pick-ups should be previously arranged. However, in circumstances out of the parent/guardian's control, please contact us by phone as soon as possible to arrange pickup. The before/after-hours fee will be applied for time outside of normal operating hours. Before 7:00 am or after 6:00 pm, a fee of \$25 is charged EVERY 15 minutes. This fee should be made with the next tuition unless arrangements are made. We are flexible and can work to your needs. If I haven't heard from the parent/guardian by 6:10 pm, I will begin contacting the listed emergency contacts.

Court orders/Parents shared custody.

If there is a court order or special arrangement between parents/guardians, we must have a written note from the custodial parent in our file. To ensure that I am in accordance with any court orders referring to the custody of the child, I require a certified copy of the custody order. I will keep this information confidential. If a new custody order is issued or if a restraining order is issued against either parent, I will also need this information on file. I will always remain neutral in all custody matters, and the facility may not serve as a visitation site.

Hugs and kisses policy

In our program, we treat all the children with the love and nurturing that we would give to our own children. We believe that a child's first happiness is knowing that he/she is loved. For this reason, we give them appropriate affection that comes naturally from us, including hugs, kisses, and cuddle time. If you are not comfortable with this policy, please make us aware.

Child Behavior & Guidance

In our program, we will use redirection as the primary method of child guidance and encourage positive self-esteem and teach personal responsibility. We enforce positive behaviors through PRAISE, RESPECT, REDIRECTION, and POSITIVE REINFORCEMENT. As well positive guidance is promoted for young children, encouraging them to develop their problem-solving and conflict-resolution skills. In this environment, children can learn at their own pace based on their individual temperaments, development, and culture.

Children will be taught and encouraged to express themselves, understand the feelings of others, and how to communicate their wants, needs, and feelings. The core components of positive guidance are:

- Environment: Consistent routines, warm and welcoming, choices of what to play, and a place to calm down and regroup.
- Time to think: We are not participants of the "time-out" method instead we use the thinking time method to help the child to calm down and think about his/her actions and then talk with the caregiver to make the right choices or express his/her feelings in a better way.
- Guidance: Showing and teaching students expectations and direct teaching about feelings and self-regulation.

Daily communication with parents is critical to supporting children in all aspects of learning, including socio-emotional development. Conference meetings can also be scheduled to better support the educator, parent, and child. My goal is to foster positive relationships between families to create a sense of community that allows for open communication should a challenge arise.

Inappropriate conduct

I make every effort to resolve difficult conflicts between children or family members within the program setting. I reserve the right to remove a child from the program temporarily or permanently in response to inappropriate conduct by the child or a family member, the safety of others, or if the child is at risk. I will conduct observations and documentation of ongoing concerns and progress. Notes will be shared with the child's parent(s). As needed, I will:

1. Redirect the child and facilitate problem-solving
2. Create daily behavior Log(s) should be signed by the parent/guardian at pick-up time and will be added to the child's file.
3. Set up a meeting with parents/guardians to discuss behavior and create a behavioral plan.
4. Last resort: If an inadequate behavior persists or the action of the child puts at risk the safety of others or the group, and it cannot be solved distracting the other children from learning, I will remove the child from the program permanently.

Withdrawal from Program

An official notice of withdrawal in writing or via email, stating the reason for withdrawal and the final date the child will attend, **MUST** be given 2 weeks in advance of terminating the contract. Fees will remain the same if you withdraw the child before notice is given. Two weeks' fees may be paid in lieu of two weeks' notice. Termination will not be accepted while the provider or child is on vacation.

Termination

The Provider reserves the right to cancel the enrollment of a child at his/her discretion or for the following possible reasons (but not limited to):

- Failure to comply with the policies outlined in the handbook
- Failure to comply with the contract
- If a destructive or hurtful child's behavior persists even with parental cooperation in stopping the behavior.
- Not paying childcare fees or late and/or recurring late payment fees.
- If the child is absent for 5 consecutive days without any communication.
- Failure to complete required forms.
- Inability to meet the child's needs without additional staff.
- If a child or any family member displays disrespect towards the provider, staff, or children.
- Parent knowingly brings their ill child to daycare.

OUR PROGRAM

Daily Schedule

Having a daily schedule helps children have expectations for their day and creates consistency and continuity. My program offers a variety of activities throughout the day based on the children's needs. Routines include outdoor experiences (weather permitting) and free play. When the children are playing, they explore, create, and learn. I also plan activities that work in different developmental areas with Virginia Standards for Early Learning.

Sample daily schedule:

*Please note this schedule is intended as a general reference. Infants create their routines, including feeding, diapering, tummy time, gross motor, sensory activities, music, dancing, and story time.

Time	Activity
07:00 am - 8:30 am	Arrival
8:30 am - 9:00 am	Breakfast Time
9:00 am - 9:30 am	-Transition (Children go the bathroom, wash hands, little ones are changed diapers, etc.) - Reading Time
9:30 am - 10:00am	Circle Time (Good morning, days of the week, weather, numbers, letters, shapes, sing with me)
10:00 am - 10:30 am	Projects/direct activity (Curriculum)
10:30 am - 11:00am	Outdoor Experiences / Outdoor Play
11:00 am - 11:20 am	Free Play
11:20 am - 11:30 pm	Transition (Children go the bathroom, wash hands, little ones are changed diapers, etc.)
11:30 am - 12:00 pm	Lunch Time
12:00 pm - 12:30 pm	Transition (Children go the bathroom, wash hands, little ones are changed diapers, etc.)
12:30 pm - 2:30 pm	Nap Time/Quiet time
2:30 pm - 3:00 pm	Transition (Children go the bathroom, wash hands, little ones are changed diapers, etc.)
3:00 pm - 3:30 pm	Snack Time
3:30 pm - 4:30 pm	Outdoor Play/Free Play
4:30 pm - 5:00 pm	Afternoon Group Time

Night and Evening Care

Tots Academy offers overnight care from 7 pm to 6 am. Monday through Friday (last pick up Saturday morning) to an additional cost arranged priority between the provider and child's parents.

Every child during nighttime care will be provided with one full meal, one individual coat/crib, a fitted sheet, and a personal blanket. Caregivers will sleep in a separate room on the same floor level as the children in care. The room is monitored by the camera with sound to be alert of the children's safety.

Parents are responsible for providing a toothbrush, and a comb or hairbrush assigned for individual use as well each child nine months of age or older shall have flame-resistant or snug-fitting sleepwear and a bath towel, every child is welcome to bring their favorite blanket, napper, stuff animal and night book.

For children in nighttime care, we will provide activities and experiences including a child routine that encourages good personal hygiene practices including bathing (if needed) and teeth brushing.

The caregiver will establish a bedtime schedule for a child in consultation with the child's parent.

Sample daily schedule:

*Please note this schedule is intended as a general reference.

Time	Activity
7:00 pm - 7:30 pm	Dinner or activities
7:30 pm - 8:00 pm	Transition (Washing hands, Bath time, teeth brushing, bathroom).
8:00 pm - 8:30 pm	Activities (table game, building with blocks, etc.) -Story Time
8:30 pm	Bedtime
6:00 am - 7:00 am	Wake-up Time/Pick-up Time

Children's Personal Belongings

Each child will be assigned a cubby to store their extra clothes and belongings. Sometimes children don't make it to the restroom in time or get dirty because they like to explore or be creative. Please make sure to leave TWO complete changes of seasonally appropriate clothing if a change of clothes is necessary for your child. If your child doesn't have a change available, Tots Academy will provide brand-new clothes (you will keep them), and you will be charged \$5-\$10 for every piece of clothing.

Children must wear clothes that you don't mind getting messy and dress according to the weather. Soiled clothing will be sent home in a plastic bag, as I do not wash clothing on-site.

The child's clothing should be labeled with his or her name or initials. While I do my absolute best to keep each item with each child, I am not responsible for lost articles. We are not responsible for any lost, misplaced, or damaged clothing or other personal items.

We know how excited all the children are to show their toys to their friends, but I ask that everybody not bring toys from home except on special days that will be planned and previously notified. I have plenty of toys to help them develop their skills and have fun as well. However, your child can bring a normal-sized (no bigger than 15 inches) stuffed animal (no hard toys) or a special blanket to cuddle with during rest time.

Rest Time

Infants are provided with their own cribs and sheets. Each baby will form its own napping and waking schedule.

Infant Safe Sleep Policy:

- All infants will be placed on their backs for sleep.
- No pillows, blankets, quilts, swaddlers, or comforters will be used in the crib.
- When infants can easily turn over from the back position to the stomach position, they are still put down to sleep on their backs but allowed to adopt whatever position they prefer.
- Infants are provided with their own clean and dry pacifier at sleep time only with parental approval. The parents must provide a pacifier.
- Bottles will never be given to the infant while lying in the crib.
- Tummy time won't be practiced on the crib; it will be given on the soft carpet or appropriate surface for infants.
- A signed physician's note must be on file if any special requirement differs from the above policy.

Toddlers & Preschoolers

Rest and sleep periods are scheduled appropriately for the age and development of the child. Toddlers and Preschoolers will rest on an individual cot with a fitted sheet and a light blanket provided by us. A child will not be forced to sleep if they do not want to but will be encouraged to rest on the cot for a minimum of 30 minutes. If they have not fallen asleep at the end of that time, they will be provided with developmentally age-appropriate to stay quiet.

Diapering

Diapers are changed at least every 2 hours or sooner if needed. If the infant requires topical ointment to prevent or treat diaper rash, it should be provided in the original package with the child's name and the corresponding "Topical Ointment Form" signed by the parent/guardian.

When a child is in pull-ups or diapers, parents/guardians will need to provide:

- A package of diapers, labeled with the child's name.
- A package of wipes, labeled with the child's name.
- An additional change of clothes.

Potty training time

It is important an open communication to maintain consistency during the toilet training process. Children must be ready to participate willingly if the toilet learning process is to be positive; to this end, we cannot and will not force a child to use the toilet. To encourage the child in the process, we use rewards during the potty-training process, such as snacks, prizes, stickers, bubbles, stamps, etc.

During potty training, parents/guardians must provide pull-ups, underpants, and changes of extra clothes. I do not use a specific method, as experience has shown that each child's situation is unique.

Technology and Media Policies

The American Academy of Pediatrics recommends that children two and under have no screen time. However, there are occasions for appropriate use of screen time that would enhance learning or extra activities, such as movie day or special holidays. A media use permission must be signed at the time of admission in order for your child to be allowed to participate in such activities. Tots Academy program uses media screens for learning purposes for short periods.

Photos & Videos

You are aware and agree that pictures or videos may be taken of your child while in care. These may be used to promote childcare services either in print or on the internet, as part of our program to evaluate and monitor your child's care, communicate with parents/guardians about daily activities and progress, and for other safety reasons.

If a picture is shared with you, where your child is on it with other children from the program, please be mindful and don't share this unless you cover the other children's faces.

A photo release permission must be signed at the time of admission, whether accepted or not of the agreement.

Outdoor Activities

All children will play outside daily, weather permitting. It is vital that all children have adequate clothing and shoes (closed toes) to safely play outside, including but not limited to hats, gloves, warm layers, and snow gear. Infants will have outdoor playtime whenever possible. There will be times when weather extremes will require children to remain inside. I will plan indoor activities on days outdoor play is prohibited due to weather or safety conditions.

Summer Fun

During the summer, all the children in our program, 2 to 12-year-olds, enjoy endless activities, including but not limited to water day, movies, crafts, and exciting games. Some of the summer games and activities include Face Painting, Music, and Movement, Scavenger Hunt, Food Fun, Foam Party, Bubbles, and many more. You will be provided with a calendar of planned activities and a notice of the fee.

Wading activities - Water Play

During the summer, I like to take advantage of the weather and plan fun water activities, including wading. This could be a new experience for infants or just a fun activity for toddlers and preschoolers. You must sign a wading form if you want your child to participate. You will be asked to send a bathing suit for your child, closed-toe water shoes (no sandals or flip flops allowed), and a towel.

Special Activities Outside of Facility

Occasionally, we may take walks around the neighborhood to local parks, open spaces, and field trips.

Transportation

Children will not be transported while in care except for walking field trips to parks or playgrounds with strollers or wagons.

FOOD & NUTRITION

Tots Academy is part of The Child and Adult Care Food Program (CACFP).

We provide breakfast, lunch, and an afternoon snack. Milk is served with breakfast and lunch. Snacks may contain 100% juice, and water is offered throughout the day. The children are offered a complete nutritional meal, but they will not be forced to eat. It is our goal to offer nutritious meals and snacks to the children in our care, as nutrition is a vital part of a child's health.

Children should not bring food except in case of allergies or special diets prescribed by a physician. A doctor's note is required for all food brought from home, including special milk and snacks. Food allergies can be life-threatening, and each child with a food allergy should have an action plan for emergency care completed by the child's physician.

Menus

Weekly menus are posted on the bulletin board and sent to the parents through email. All food products are purchased weekly, bi-weekly, or monthly. The perishable products are bought fresh. For reference, our mealtimes are as follows:

Breakfast: 8:30 AM - 9:00 AM

Lunch: 11:30 AM - 12:00 PM`

Snack: 3:00 PM - 3:30 PM

*Schedules can vary depending on the needs of all the children in the program.

Children who are dropped off after 9:00 AM should have already eaten breakfast. (Exception: Doctor dental appointment or previously arrange)

Water

- We encourage all the children in our program to drink water throughout the day.
- We provide a reusable bottle of water with their name and have available water to refill it.
- Water is visible and available to children, indoors and outdoors.

Birthdays and Holidays

Birthdays and holidays are special days. So, on these occasions, children may eat cake, cookies, or other treats to celebrate.

- ♥ We will celebrate the holidays with learning activities, projects, crafts, special events, or snacks. We will provide more information before our celebrations.
- ♥ Birthdays will be celebrated for each child in childcare. If your child's birthday falls on a closure day, it will be scheduled as close to their birthday as possible.

Parents can come to celebrate their child's special milestone with us. We can coordinate a celebration that everyone can enjoy. Please talk with me before bringing snacks or treats.

Food Restrictions

We offer a variety of food on the children's menu, and the children learn to try new things when they see other children enjoying them. However, we are always open to suggestions to encourage your child to eat or try the same things at home.

I highly recommend that you don't send food from home. There are other children around who will want to try the same food. If your child brings any food, drink, or snack, it will be kept in the cubby or backpack to take home at pick-up time.

*We care about all the children's health, and something you send could put others at risk of an allergic reaction.

Allergies & special dietary

Please let me know during the enrollment process if your infant or child has any known food allergies or if the family has any religious beliefs that require special dietary attention. This way, I can control access to certain foods and obtain any required documentation.

Despite best efforts to monitor the facility and raise awareness among families, it is impossible to eliminate all risks for children with food and/or environmental allergies. It is possible that the presence of an allergen on a child's clothing or belongings from home may trigger another child's

allergies. Known allergies and the child's emergency contact information must be posted in the classroom in case of an emergency. To keep confidentiality, we will place a cover sheet on it.

If your child has an allergy, we will require an action plan for emergency care completed by the child's physician. Any medication necessary should be provided in a labeled safety carrying case with the original package from the pharmacy and will be kept in our emergency bag.

Infants Bottles

Parents must provide prepared infant formula (child's record should contain brand of formula and schedule and be updated frequently) or breastmilk in plastic bottles (no glass bottles allowed); each bottle must be clearly labeled with name, last name, date, and content (e.g.: formula, breastmilk, milk, soy milk.) Bottle supplies will be stored in a refrigerator specific for their use and warmed in a bottle warmer as needed. A one-day emergency supply of disposable bottles and nipples, in the brand of the parent's choice, is to be provided by the parents.

After the bottle is warm and offered to the infant several times, the unconsumed content in the bottle will be discarded after 2 hours, and the bottles will be rinsed.

Breastfeeding Friendly Environment

Tots Academy is awarded Virginia Breastfeeding Friendly, committed to providing ongoing support to breastfeeding mothers. Our staff is trained on best practices regarding things like Infant Feeding, Storage, and Handling of Breastmilk and offers a comfortable space for staff and breastfeeding mothers.

Breastfeeding Policy Information

- Breastfeeding mothers can breastfeed or express their milk in the infant room. Our infant room provides a calm, private, sanitary space with a comfortable chair and breastfeeding pillow.
- Staff will work with mothers who wish to breastfeed on-site regarding the infant or child's feeding schedule and feeding times.

Storage and Handling of Breastmilk

- Breastfeeding mothers and employees may store their expressed breast milk in the center refrigerator or freezer.
- Mothers should provide their bottles and containers, clearly labeled with names and dates.
- Expressed breast milk may be stored and transported in an insulated cooler bag with frozen ice packs for up to 24 hours, or else frozen in dry ice (follow safety precautions when handling dry ice external icon). Once breast milk is cooled, it should remain cool until it is consumed. Breast milk that has been transported in an insulated cooler bag with frozen ice packs can then be refrigerated or frozen.

Communication and Supply of Breastmilk

- The center is committed to providing ongoing support to breastfeeding mothers, including providing an opportunity to breastfeed their baby in the morning and evening and holding off giving a bottle, if possible when mom is due to arrive.
- Staff will communicate with all families regarding the supply of breastmilk and formula that is on hand in the program for each child. Communication will include what type of formula will be left on hand for emergency use for infants that breastfeed. A signed form of this arrangement will be kept in the child's files.

Breastfeeding Program, Staff and Training

- All the staff will be trained in the proper storage and handling of breast milk and ways to support breastfeeding mothers.
- Our program will follow human milk storage guidelines from the American Academy of Pediatrics and Centers for Disease Control and Prevention to avoid waste and prevent food-borne illness.
- Staff will be trained on best feeding practices, including handling breastmilk and best infant feeding practices.
- Breastfeeding and program policies will be reviewed yearly and updated yearly or as needed.

- Employees shall be provided a flexible schedule for breastfeeding or pumping to provide breast milk for their children.

Local Virginia Resources for breastfeeding

- Virginia Department of Health: state and national resources and materials
- Virginia Breastfeeding Coalition: lists local coalitions and groups
- Virginia Breastfeeding Advisory Committee: lists state and local organizations and agencies
- La Leche League: (lalli.org) mother-to-mother support for breastfeeding group, find a local leader or support group
- International Lactation Consultant Associations: (ilca.org) find a lactation consultant in an area

Infant Nutrition

Infants 6 months and up are provided with solid foods developmentally appropriate and, as they get older, will encourage self-feeding techniques. Children who are one year of age are served unflavored whole milk. Children 2 years old and older are served fat-free or low-fat (1%) milk, USDA requirement unless otherwise discussed per the child's individual needs. After 13 months, your doctor must provide a note to continue formula feeding. Breast milk is considered the equivalent of cow's milk and does not require a note.

Bottle Transitioning

When a child has reached the developmental stage of holding his/her own bottle, sitting up, and crawling, he/she is ready to begin transitioning from the bottle to a sippy cup. I will work with the parents to develop a plan together for bottle transitioning.

HEALTH & SAFETY

Keeping your child at home when they are sick is important to your child as well as to other children being cared for at the program. Infants and toddlers are very tactile by nature and explore with their mouths. When they start spending time with other children, they are exposed to many immune-building illnesses. I wash toys daily and sanitize them, wash hands (both children and caregivers) frequently, and use other methods to help prevent the spread of illness.

Immunizations

Parents or guardians must provide a completed Certificate of Immunizations or exemption status on or before the first day of care. All children are required to be fully immunized per State of Virginia requirements unless an approved exemption is on file for the child.

If no record is received, the child will not be allowed to attend. There will be no reduction or refund of tuition for any days missed due to missing records and/or immunizations.

- Immunization records will be reviewed on an annual basis.
- The parent will be notified in writing of any missing immunizations.
- When your child/children get a new vaccination please bring us a copy to add it to your child's file, we are required to keep records updated.

Handling of Injuries

When a child has an accident/incident, such as small bumps, scratches, or bruises, we will render assistance with First Aid. Please let us know if you would like to be notified immediately for minor bumps, bruises, scratches, and cuts. Otherwise, you will be notified at the end of the day and you will be provided with an incident report to be signed. Minor injuries and scrapes will be cleaned and covered with an adhesive bandage as an appropriate or applied ice pack if needed. I will not apply any topical ointment unless requested by the parent. If your child is injured and requires medical attention outside of our abilities, you will be notified immediately, and the parent or guardian will transport the child if medical treatment is needed. If circumstances warrant and the parent or guardian cannot be reached, we will contact the emergency contacts on file. For major emergencies requiring the services of an emergency medical team, I will contact you as soon as the situation allows, and the child will be transported by ambulance.

Sick Policy

If your child becomes sick and needs to leave care, you will be asked to come to pick up your child as soon as possible (30 to 45 minutes). When your child is sick and needs to be excluded from the other children, we don't count on more staff for one-to-one care.

Children with the following symptoms will need to be excluded from childcare until treated:

- **Fever:** If the temperature is 100 degrees or higher.
- **Vomiting:** Recurrent vomiting (2 or more)
- **Diarrhea:** Defined as an increased number of loose stools and increased water in the stool that a diaper or clothing cannot contain.
- **Pink Eye:** Unusual amount of discharge from or irritation to their eye(s). If the diagnosis is VIRAL CONJUNCTIVITIS, your child may return AS LONG AS THERE IS NO DISCHARGE.
- **Runny nose:** Thick White, Green, or Yellow Discharge: Children will be sent home if they appear to have any thick white, green, or yellow discharge. This is often indicative of an infection.
- **Persistent Hacking Cough:** Children with persistent hacking coughs will be sent home. Before returning, they will need a written evaluation and diagnosis from their doctor and at least 24 hours of treatment. If they do not require any treatment, we need a doctor's note with a diagnosis and clearance that it is not contagious.
- **Rash:** For any rash besides the common diaper rash or skin irritation that is suspicious or unidentifiable rash. Before returning, you must check with the health department or your health professional to guarantee that it is not contagious.
- **Bacterial Infection:** This includes strep throat, scarlet fever, impetigo, bacterial conjunctivitis, chicken pox, and any skin infections that are draining or infected.
- Any communicable disease listed in the Virginia Department of Health's current communicable disease.

Children who require or have taken any medication that may mask cold, flu, or other illness symptoms within 4-6 hours must stay home to protect all children, families, and staff.

Children sent home or presenting any of the symptoms described above must stay home the next day for observation. Children must be symptom-free before returning to school (after the day of observation). If your children present the symptoms on their first day back, they will again be sent home.

Common Cold Policy

Children suffering from a common cold will be assessed individually. Factors of consideration include your child's developmental level, which is in congruence with our ability to limit the spread of germs.

The younger your child, the more difficult it is to prevent the spread of germs. Examples include hand-to-face contact, mouthing of toys, uncontrolled nasal discharge, uncovered sneezing and coughing, etc.

Doctor's Note

Children with diarrhea, fever, vomiting, rash or any other severe symptoms of illness must be seen by their healthcare provider and bring a doctor's note resuming normal activity.

Children must be 24 hours free of symptoms before returning to the facility.

Medical prescriptions should be administered for at least 24 hours before returning to daycare so children can have adequate time to recover and are no longer contagious.

Reporting Communicable Illness

If your child has a contagious illness, please notify us immediately.

When a child has been exposed to a communicable disease listed in the Department of Health's current communicable disease chart, the provider shall notify the parents within 24 hours or the next business day of the home's having been informed, unless forbidden by law, except for life-threatening diseases, which must be reported to parents immediately. The provider shall consult the local health department if there is a question about the communicability of a disease. This includes, but is not limited to strep throat, conjunctivitis, pertussis, chicken pox, hepatitis, measles, mumps, meningitis, diphtheria, and rubella.

If a child is diagnosed with a communicable illness, all parents and the local health department . Any child diagnosed with a communicable illness will not be allowed to return to the program until a healthcare professional or local health department representative determines that the child is no longer contagious and is well enough to return to childcare. In such instances, a note from a healthcare professional is required.

Lice Policy

Head lice are highly contagious and can be very difficult to get rid of. Children who have lice and/or nits may not attend daycare until they are completely gone. This typically takes at least three days to make sure the home and child are properly treated. If a child is diagnosed with lice while in our care, a hair covering will be placed on the child's head, parents or guardians must pick up the child as soon as possible. Child can return to the facility when all nits have been removed.

Medication Administration Procedures

The intent of this policy is to ensure the proper steps are followed when it is necessary to administer medication while in care. My preference is to not have to provide medications, but I understand under some circumstances this is unavoidable.

I require that all medications be given at home whenever possible. When a child requires medication to be administered, a parent must make arrangements to give the first dose at home so that the child may be observed for any reactions to the medication.

If it is necessary for medications to be given to a child during the day, myself or another designated staff member trained in Medication Administration will administer medication to children.

The following procedures must be followed for the administration of medication:

1. Medication may only be administered with written parental permission.
2. Medication may only be administered if a complete order and authorization form signed by the child's healthcare provider is provided.
3. All prescription medications provided by parents or legal guardians must be in the original container with the prescription label from the pharmacy containing the child's name, dosage, and route.
4. Over-the-counter medication will not be administered without a healthcare plan signed by the child's healthcare provider. A child-resistant container must be provided and appropriately labeled with the child's first and last name.
5. Topical non-steroid medication (sunscreen, diaper ointment, and lotion) will only be applied if a signed form from the parents or guardians is on file.
6. Prescribed and over-the-counter medications will be kept in a locked storage box at the recommended temperature as prescribed on the label.
7. Medication will not be used beyond the expiration date on the container and/or the written order. Expired medications will be returned to the parent or disposed of properly.
8. A medication log will be maintained to record the instructions for giving the medication, consent obtained from the parent or legal guardian, amount, the time

of administration, and the person who administered each dose of the medication. Spills, reactions, and refusal to take medication will be noted on the log.

Power Failure

Children should remain in the facility and, if possible, proceed with activities as usual, or may go to the backyard until power resumes. If power cannot be restored within a reasonable amount of time, we will close and contact the parents to inform them of the closing and of the need to immediately pick up their child.

Loss of Water

Water loss is an impact to the quantity of water of either a private or public water supply. If, for any reason, we have a water outage, parents will be notified, and our facility can't continue operating. We have bottled water available for drinking purposes. If the water service remains out of service for an extended length of time, we will close and contact the parents to inform them of the closing and of the need to immediately pick up their child.

Disaster & Emergency Preparedness

The disaster and emergency preparedness procedures are implemented to provide for the safety and well-being of the children in care. This plan serves to protect children and other personnel in the event of a natural or human-caused emergency or disaster.

In an emergency, the program will assume responsibility for emergency actions until emergency service personnel arrive.

Safety Preparations

- Evacuation plans and procedures are posted for families to see and are available for review.
- Exits open freely and are not blocked.
- The emergency bag is fully stocked at all times.
- A complete emergency response plan is posted and reviewed annually.
- See the written evacuation plan for locations for reunification in the event the building is evacuated.

Drills

Fire and Emergency evacuation procedures will be practiced monthly with all caregivers and children in care during all shifts that children are in care. Shelter-in-place procedures will be practiced a minimum of twice per year. Drills will be conducted and documented to include children and adults in attendance, the start and completion time of the drill, and notes or changes to be made.

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

I accept children in accordance with the Americans with Disabilities Act. Every effort will be made to care for every child and accommodations will be made as much as possible, based on the layout of the childcare space, available insurance, and if adequate care can be given.

Pets

Tots Academy doesn't have any pets on the premises indoor or outdoor.

Secondhand Smoke

Children will never be exposed to secondhand smoke in the home. This is a smoke-free facility. No smoking will be allowed on the premises while the children are in care.

Parking

It is important that we keep my neighbor's driveway and access clear and that you park in legal parking areas in front of my home. Please don't turn in the neighbors' driveway. Use the cul-de-sac. Help me to maintain good relationships with my neighbors.

Reporting Suspected Child Abuse

I am required by the Commonwealth of Virginia to report any and all instances of suspected child abuse and neglect, including but not limited to physical abuse, mental abuse, or sexual abuse

"Suspected or known child abuse or neglect should be reported to Child Protection Services".

Standards for Licensed Family Day Homes

A copy of the regulation, Standards for Licensed Family Day Homes, and additional information about the family day home may be obtained from the following websites:

<https://law.lis.virginia.gov/admincode/title8/agency20/chapter800/>

Staff Qualification

- Certified in children and adults First Aid/CPR training.
- Conducted background checks,
- Two reference letters
- Three months of programmatic experience

- Minimum of sixteen clock hours of training annually in areas relevant to job responsibilities.
- A high school program completion or the equivalent or evidence of meeting the requirements for admission to an accredited college or university.



ACKNOWLEDGMENT OF RECEIPT OF HANDBOOK

"Tots Academy is a place where little learners and families can thrive together".

I have written all these policies to enhance clear communication in our parent/provider relationship and so that both of us know what is expected of each other in our cooperative effort to provide Tots Academy children with the very best childcare experience possible. If you have any questions about any of these policies, please feel free to ask me. Our relationship is very important to me. Please communicate your ideas and needs with me on a regular basis. I THANK YOU from the bottom of my heart for entrusting me to provide care for your precious child/ren.

As a parent/guardian of _____ enrolled at Tots Academy Family Day Home, I acknowledge that I have received and reviewed the Tots Academy Family Handbook and signing it, I agree to all the terms and conditions contained within it.

Parent/Guardian Printed Name	Signature	Date