



2026 Employee Packet

Our Mission

Mimi's Creative Kids will provide quality preschool education in an adventuresome, creative, and accepting environment where we encourage the students to explore their own individualism while helping them to cultivate a strong sense of self-worth and an acceptance for others. We want all the students to grow under knowledgeable guidance in all aspects of education and creativity.

We believe that when children are encouraged and supported completely, they will grow and develop into positive, productive adults. We encourage parents to bring suggestions to the class as well as participate in hands-on time in the classroom with their children. We believe that when discipline is needed it can be carried out in a positive way so that children understand what they did wrong, without tearing down the child's self-esteem.

Mimi's Creative Kids is a family-based environment for childcare when the parents need to be elsewhere. We believe that all children should want to go to Mimi's house, and all parents should have the satisfaction and comfort in knowing their child is happy to be there, and that they are safe.

Mimi's Creative Kids does not discriminate on the basis of race, religion, or ethnic origin when accepting applications or enrollment. We are here to be a service to and for our community.

-Kim "Mimi" Walker, Owner and Director

Goals For Children in Care

Emotional

- To become independent and learn to be in control of their emotions
- To be able to express and deal with the emotions they have
- To learn how others, express and deal with emotions
- To develop empathy with others

Social

- To be able to interact effectively with others, regardless of perceived differences
- To be able to respect others and the property of others
- To be able to function well in a group setting
- To be able to understand why they should cooperate with others
- To be able to develop meaningful friendships

Physical

- To develop large and small motor skills
- To learn the importance of good nutrition and good hygiene
- To develop lifelong, healthy habits

Intellectual

- To develop a lifetime love of learning
- To learn observation and discussion skills
- To build upon natural curiosity
- To develop the foundation needed to advance in the primary grades

Personnel Policies

Mimi's Creative Kids Learning Center strives to employ individuals who are most qualified to meet the needs of the Center and the children in care. Employment shall be based on proven competence or potential ability as indicated by academic achievements, personal attitude, and prior work experience in accordance with the necessary qualifications and essential duties listed in the job description. The employment of all individuals shall be contingent upon the approval of the Director.

Equal Opportunity Employer | Non-Discrimination Policy

Mimi's Creative Kids Learning Center is an Equal Opportunity Employer. All employment activities will be conducted in a manner to assure equal opportunity for all and will be based solely on the individual merit and fitness of applicants, candidates, and/or employees without regard to race, color, religion, creed, sex, gender, age, national origin, sexual orientation, pregnancy, or disability. Employees hired for positions where the primary responsibility is direct childcare must be eighteen (18) years of age.

At-Will Employment

Employment in the state of Texas is "at-will." The "at-will" relationship affords the employees the right to resign for any reason. We do, however, hope to provide a work environment which will encourage you to remain with our program. Likewise, the employer may terminate the relationship at any time, with or without cause and with or without notice. It is further understood that the "At-Will" employment relationship may not be altered by any written document or by verbal agreement, unless such alteration is specifically acknowledged in writing and signed by an authorized executive of Mimi's Creative Kids Learning Center.

Employment at the Center

Once an applicant has been offered a position at Mimi's Creative Kids Learning Center, there are several additional criteria which must be met by the applicant within a prescribed time to be employed at the Center. These include health and safety screening of the applicant, along with other required documentation which must be submitted and completed during the application process or within a pre-determined span of time upon being hired. Mimi's Creative Kids Learning Center is committed to providing a healthy and safe environment for its employees, the children under our care and for those who visit our facility.

The following health and safety checks must be completed prior to employment.

Safety Screening

Just as your individual health is important to the Center, other personal factors which may affect the safety and health of the children in your care or of other individuals at the Center must be assessed as well.

Drug Screening

A five-panel drug screen must be administered and passed prior to employment at the Center to demonstrate that a prospective employee is free of drugs or other

substances classified as controlled substances under the Texas Controlled Substances Act. While this drug screen does not have to be renewed according to a particular schedule, Mimi's Creative Kids Learning Center, at its sole discretion, may require the drug screen to be completed again under certain circumstances - e.g., if the employee was involved in an accident in a company vehicle or while transporting children, as well as other situations deemed appropriate by the Director. Mimi's Creative Kids Learning Center will cover the cost of the initial drug screen and subsequent screenings as appropriate.

Criminal Background Check

State law mandates that all new employees have current clearances from State Police. State law and licensing stipulate that the clearances show the employee has no open accusations or convictions of child abuse or neglect, nor of a felony violation of any law intended to control the illegal possession or distribution of any substance classified as a controlled substance in the Texas Controlled Substance Act.

While prior violations of the law will not immediately disqualify a prospective applicant from being offered employment at Mimi's Creative Kids Learning Center, some misdemeanor and most felony convictions will prohibit the Center from employing such an individual, as per Texas state childcare licensing rules and regulations.

Mimi's Creative Kids Learning Center, at its sole discretion, may require additional criminal checks during an employee's tenure at the Center, if circumstances suggest this is necessary. These items are all in accordance with state licensing guidelines. Prospective employees who fail to meet these guidelines or who refuse to comply with any of the items listed above will be disqualified from employment consideration. Please see also the policies later in this section which occur after employment has begun.

Required Training

Mimi's Creative Kids Learning Center must ensure that all staff have adequate and appropriate training to work with children. The following are required training for all new employees of the Center:

First Aid/CPR (within the first 90 days of employment)

Universal Precautions

Abuse and Neglect

Licensing Rules

Transportation

Safe Sleep/SIDS

Child Growth and Development

Guidance and Discipline

Policies and Procedures for all areas at Mimi's Creative Kids

Each type of training is described either in other sections of this handbook or information will be provided in separate documents to the employee at the training session. All training listed here will be provided and/or paid for by the Center.

Other Required Documentation

Federal and State law require that Mimi's Creative Kids Learning Center have other documentation on file or recorded to ensure that you are eligible to work in the United States and that you are properly qualified for the position.

These items can include:

Proof of eligibility to work | Driver's license or other state-issued identification, Social Security card

Education transcripts - Must furnish High School Diploma or Equivalent thereof

Please note that the above list is not all-inclusive of items which may be required for a new hire to begin work at the Center. The orientation process will require additional documentation, and this will be explained before or during that time.

Employee Classifications

Every employee, at the time of hire, will be classified as either FULL TIME or PART TIME. These classifications are not intended as a job description: they are used solely to determine benefits and overtime eligibility. In addition, new employment hires are considered PROVISIONAL employees for the first part of their employment as described below.

Full-Time: A person who is regularly scheduled for at least thirty-five hours per week. Full-time employees are eligible for full-time benefits described later.

Part-Time: A person who is regularly scheduled for LESS THAN thirty hours or less. Part-time employees are eligible for part-time benefits described later.

Provisional Status

All employees will be considered provisional for up to 90 calendar days of employment when initially hired or placed in a new position. During the Provisional Period. Management will evaluate the provisional employee's performance to determine if she/he meets the standard set by Mimi's as outlined by both the job description and this handbook. Provisional employees who have been placed in a new position at the Center are not eligible to use any form of accrued paid absence during the provisional period (paid sick leave, vacation time, personal time), excluding designated holidays.

The provisional period may be extended to 30 days, by approval of the Director and only where it is deemed necessary and appropriate. In all cases of requests to extend an employee's provisional period, the Director will provide a performance appraisal and the reason for extension and length of extension that is recommended. Requests for extension cannot be submitted after the provisional period concludes.

Upon successful completion of the provisional period, the Director will recommend whether the provisional employee should be retained. The recommendation will be accompanied by a completed final provisional performance appraisal. Upon approval, the employee will enter regular employment status and thereby will be deemed eligible for those benefits provided to regular employees of the same classification. Should the provisional employee not be recommended for regular status, the employee will be terminated no later than the last day of the provisional period or any extension thereof.

Employment may be terminated at any time during the provisional period with or without cause.

Pay Schedule/Recording Hours

Our work week begins on Sunday at 12:00 am and ends Saturday at 11:59 pm. Employees will be paid weekly beginning one week after employment begins. Paychecks will be directly deposited on Fridays at noon. Employees must sign in and out accurately to record the actual hours worked. Employees who falsely represent the number of hours worked or those who fail to sign in and out correctly may have their paychecks delayed and may be subject to disciplinary action up to and including termination.

When payday falls on a holiday, paychecks will be issued on the next business day after the holiday.

Evaluation and Advancement

Reviews of an employee's work are important to help determine advancement at the Center and an employee's suitability for continued employment. Provisional employees are evaluated at the 30- and 90-day mark; employees who successfully complete the provisional employment period are then evaluated annually thereafter, on or near the anniversary of the first day of employment. The impact of successful evaluations on wages is described herein.

The first (30) days of employment are provisional. At the end of the 30 days, the first review of the employee will take place.

A second, more extensive review will occur after the employee has worked 90 days. Employees with satisfactory or better reviews will receive a raise determined at that time. The new pay rate will be applied to the hours worked starting the next full week after the review.

Once an employee has successfully been employed by the Center for 90 days, future review will be conducted on an annual basis, occurring on or near the anniversary of the first day worked. Subsequent raises will be performance-based. Exemplary service and performance may be rewarded with a more substantial raise; a poor review (but with correctable behaviors) may result in a smaller raise if one is given.

Evaluations not only look back on an employee's performance but also look forward to establishing short-term and long-term goals for the employee. Goals should serve both the

needs of the Center and the employee, allowing both to grow. Progress toward reaching those goals may be used in an employee's annual evaluation.

During the evaluation, the Director will go over the evaluation with the employee, discussing the employee's accomplishments, progress, and any areas of concern. The employees will be expected to sign the evaluation to include discussion and receipt of a copy of the evaluation. Note that signing the evaluation does not mean that the employee agrees with every item listed or discussed; in the case of an employee's disagreement with the appraisal, written comments from the employee may be attached to the document the employee's objections to items.

If an employee refuses to sign the evaluation, another employee must witness the refusal by signing verifying the refusal to sign.

Work Schedule

Mimi's Creative Kids is open Monday through Friday from 5:30-6:00. Temporary and permanent schedule changes may be necessary to effectively meet the needs of the program.

Hours of attendance have been carefully planned and employees are required to work the hours and days for which they have been scheduled. If you are unable to report to work for any reason, you must notify the Director/Assistant Director at least 4 hours prior to your scheduled starting time. Failure to provide notice in a timely manner will be considered an unexcused absence and may result in disciplinary action. Employees will not be permitted to use available leave time for an unexcused absence. Employees who fail to notify the Director/Assistant Director at all may be considered to have abandoned their position, which will result in termination.

Holidays and Other Closings

From time to time, the Center may be closed for a holiday observance or because of an emergency. Hourly staff are not paid for their regularly scheduled hours during holidays or emergency closings. In situations where the Center closes after opening for the day, employees will be paid only for the hours they work.

Hours of Operation

Monday thru Friday | 5:30 AM to 6:00 PM

Friday and Saturday | As needed

Early Arrival is 5:30 AM to 6:00 AM. There is an additional cost of \$25 per week for this service and the fess must be paid in advance.

Holiday Schedule

Martin Luther King, Jr., Day | Monday, January 19, 2026

Good Friday | April 3, 2026

Memorial Day | Monday, May 25, 2026

Independence Day | Friday, July 3, 2026

Labor Day | Monday, September 7, 2026

Thanksgiving | Thursday, November 26, 2026 and Friday, November 27, 2026

Christmas | Thursday, December 24, 2026- Friday, December 25, 2026

New Years | Noon Thursday, December 31, 2026 to Friday, January 1, 2025

Staff Development | Thursday, May 21, 2026, and Friday, May 22, 2026

Staff Development | Thursday, July 23, 2026, and Friday, July 24, 2026

Generally, when one of the listed holidays falls on a Sunday, it will be observed the following Monday. Likewise, if the holiday falls on a Saturday, it will be observed the preceding Friday.

Emergency Closings

Due to severe weather conditions or other emergency situations, there may be times when the Center may be closed. Emergency closings are at the discretion of the Director.

Severe Weather Conditions

In the event of severe weather conditions, the Center will generally follow the Athens School District in determining whether to close the Center. Employees are instructed to listen to local radio and television stations for emergency closing information.

Employees are also instructed to contact the Director/Assistant Director for further instructions. Employees are instructed to contact the Director/Assistant Director by 6:00 PM and again at 8:00 PM for further instructions.

Health

Your health is important to the Center! Not only does your health affect your own ability to perform your duties effectively, but your health can also affect others - the children under your care, parents, and other staff. As such, staff should follow similar guidelines to those laid out for sending children home (temperature exceeding 101F, vomiting, etc.) as indicators as to when staff should remain home instead of reporting to work, or when staff members should be sent home.

Illness

If you are ill, please contact the Director/Assistant Director at least 4 hours in advance to ensure that we can provide adequate coverage to meet the state ratio requirements. In general, staff who provide adequate notice will not be required to provide documentation (doctor's note, etc.) for the first day of absence. Providing less than 4 hours' notice or having an illness which lasts more than a day may require official documentation to validate the absence and permit the employee to return to work. You must call the Director; a text message will not be accepted.

Sick Days

Please refer to the Benefits section of this handbook for an explanation.

Jury/Witness Duty

When leave of absence must be taken for jury duty or to answer a subpoena in court, the Center will recognize this leave WITHOUT pay. Employees must notify the Director/Assistant Director as soon as possible after they receive notice they are called for Jury or witness duty. A copy of the official request to serve or subpoena should be provided to the Director/Assistant Director upon receipt of such notification.

Bereavement Leave

When the death of an immediate member of an employee's family necessitates her or his absence from work, the Director/Assistant Director may grant up to seven (7) days of leave, WITHOUT pay. Immediate family member includes spouse, sibling, child, grandchild, parent, grandparent, etc.

In addition, anyone who permanently resides in the employee's household may be considered a family member for purposes of bereavement leave, at the Director's discretion.

When the death of a non-immediate member of an employee's family, necessitates his or her absence from work, up to three (3) days of leave WITHOUT pay may be granted. Non-immediate family members include step-parent, aunt, uncle, in-law, step-child, niece, nephew, etc.

Bereavement leave for the loss of a step-parent/step-child may be extended to seven (7) days if stepchild was primarily raised by the employee, or the employee was primarily raised by the stepparent. Employees must request Bereavement Leave as soon as possible in advance of the leave.

Controlled Substances

To ensure the health and safety of the children at the Center and of other employees, there are other restrictions regarding both legal and illegal behaviors which have been shown to be detrimental to the employee and those around the employee.

All facilities, ground and vehicles of the Center are tobacco-free environments. Smoking or any other use of a tobacco product in the presence of children or parents during working hours is strictly prohibited. Failure to abide by this policy will result in disciplinary action, up to and including termination.

Furthermore, using, possessing or being under the influence of alcohol or illegal drugs working hours or while on the Center property (including vehicles and during class excursions) is strictly prohibited and will result in immediate termination of duties.

Employee Benefits

Mimi's Creative Kids is a small, family-oriented daycare. We do strive to provide additional benefits to employees whenever possible, based on funding. Benefits of eligibility are generally determined by an employee's classification. Employees are classified as either full or part-time for the purpose of determining applicable benefits. Employees will generally be advised at the time of hiring of the benefits for which they are eligible. Employees will be notified of additional benefits and their eligibility during employment.

Mimi's Creative Kids does not guarantee any benefits to any employee. The Center reserves the right to change, cancel and/or deny benefits at its sole discretion to maintain the fiscal soundness of the Center. We currently offer the following benefits to employees. Some are immediately available when an employee starts work; others depend on the length of employment.

Each employee must give a 2-week notice before leaving employment and work the entire 2 weeks to be paid regular pay on final pay checks.

Employees must complete the 90-probation period and/or first 30 applied for CCMS and have it approved within the days, or they are responsible for childcare fees. Childcare in any form is a benefit and is not a guarantee for anyone under any circumstances. Should we financially not be able to continue with the benefit everyone will be given 30 days notice of the change.

Vacation Time and Sick Days

Both full and part-time employees shall be eligible for vacation time, calculated as follows: You are paid for the average hours you work in a day. It is not blanketed for 8 hours. If you normally work 6 that is what your vacation day will reflect.

Full Time

Upon completing one full year of employment (which includes the employee's provisional period), the full-time employee shall earn one (1) week of paid vacation. Application to use earned vacation time must be submitted at least four (4) weeks in advance of the desired time off. A change to approved vacation time requires prior approval of Director. The Center reserves the right to deny an employee's vacation request for any reason including, but not limited to other employees requesting the same time; the employee's performance is not satisfactory, and time off would disrupt corrective action efforts; special events or activities which would necessitate employee's presence. Employees are discouraged from paying for or scheduling vacations until they have received approval.

After completing the third full year of employment, the full-time employee will earn two (2) weeks of paid vacation each year, subject to the same restrictions above.

Unused vacation time is forfeited. Vacation time may NOT be used in lieu of a full-time employee requiring two weeks' notice to end employment. Full time employees whose employment has been terminated by the Center shall also lose all accrued vacation time, without compensation.

Vacation days MUST be scheduled; you may not just use them at random or after the absence. Vacation days are approved by those who scheduled the day first and goes by seniority after that. Only one employee can be out at a time, no exceptions. Vacation must be scheduled at least two weeks in advance.

Part Time

Upon completing one full year of employment (which includes the employee's provisional period) the part-time employee shall earn two (2) days of paid vacation. Application to use earned vacation time must be submitted at least three (3) weeks in advance of the desired time off. A change to approved vacation time requires prior approval of Director. The Center reserves the right to deny any employee's vacation request for any reason including, but not limited to other employees requesting the same time, the employee's performance is not satisfactory, and time off would disrupt corrective action efforts, special events or activities which would necessitate employee's presence. Employees are discouraged from paying for or scheduling vacations until they have received approval.

After completing the third full year of employment, the full-time employee will earn four (4) days of paid vacation each year, subject to the same restrictions above.

Unused vacation time is forfeited. Vacation time may NOT be used in lieu of a full-time employee requiring two weeks' notice to end employment. Full time employees whose employment has been terminated by the Center shall also lose all accrued vacation time, without compensation.

Vacation days MUST be scheduled; you may not just use them at random or after the absence. Vacation days are approved by those who scheduled the day first and go by seniority after that. Only one employee can be out at a time, no exception. Vacation must be scheduled for at least two weeks in advance.

Attendance | Sick Days | Holiday Pay

After 90 days of good standing, employees will receive 3 sick days per year. Also, after 90 days, holidays (the day itself) will be paid for. Should the center be closed for additional days they are unpaid unless the employee has vacation time (except for the week of Christmas closure) to use and must be scheduled in advance.

Training

Mimi's Creative Kids will follow all Minimum State Requirements for teachers and other staff members. All annual training hours will be kept up with and each employee is expected to have their hours. All employees are required to have their CPR training within the first 90 days if they are not current. The Center will offer a variety of training and educational opportunities to its employees. Many of these are required, others maybe optional. Staff are advised that licensing requirements mandate that caregivers at the Center must complete 30 hours of training annually to remain in compliance with state and other regulations. All training and educational opportunities must be approved in advance by the Director to be paid for by the Center.

Childcare

Mimi's Creative Kids allows employees to enroll their minor children in the program at the employees discounted rate. For one child it is half off the posted fees for the child's age. If there is more than one child, then the full rate would be paid for the first and half off the second child per standard rates posted. The center reserves the right to limit the number of employee's children receiving reduced childcare at the center.

Under most circumstances, an employee who has a child enrolled in the center will be prohibited from providing direct care to her or his child. Employees who fail to pay tuition according to the Fee Agreement will have their childcare services terminated/suspended, just as any other parent would.

The center further reserves the right to disenroll an employee's child(ren) if the employee's performance is affected by having his or her child(ren) at the Center. Employees must remember they are employed to perform a specific job and not allow themselves to be distracted by having their children enrolled in the program. Employees are prohibited from interfering with the supervision or authority of their child(ren)'s classroom teacher.

Teacher Responsibilities & Job Description:

All staff must follow classroom rules outlined in teacher responsibilities with children, curriculum, behavior, and taking proper care of toys and items in your room or that are loaned to you.

All staff must follow Frog Street play curriculum and appropriate timelines. Have children sitting while you prepare activities; all prep work must be done during working lunch or day before.

No staff may have children sit and sleep at table, in bouncers, swings, etc. for more than 15 minutes at a time, even if they have toys or you are playing with them.

All staff must complete appropriate child assessments, parent conferences (phone, in-person, video call), and prepare learning activities in advance.

All staff should do their part to maintain their learning environment and take pride in it. Once you set your schedule, that schedule should be followed until Summer break.

All staff should ensure they are teaching and tracking what your children need to advance in classes.

All staff should use centers as teaching tools. Staff should not allow students to spread learning activities across the room. Proper supervision of centers including staff sitting with students at centers actively engaged.

Disciplinary actions for not following these responsibilities include and immediate written warning for the first offense, being sent home immediately without pay for the second offense, and being given a three-day suspension for the third offense.

Meals and Breaks

Because of ratio requirements and state guidelines, meals and breaks at the Center must be handled strategically. Employees will generally eat the same meal and food as the children in their care, as per state guidelines. Thus, meals taken with the children are considered paid time, as they are part of the duties assigned. The Center does not charge employees for these meals.

Employees may take a break of up to 15 minutes for every full 3 hours worked, ratios and staffing requirements permitting. Breaks of this sort are considered unpaid time. Employees cannot leave children unattended during a break and ratios must always be maintained.

Required Staff Meetings

Because of the enhanced communication allowed between the staff and Director, it is crucial that each staff member attend all called meetings, usually schedule monthly. Exceptions for attendance must be approved in writing by the Director, in advance of the meeting. All staff meetings will be announced with enough advance notice that all staff may plan attendance and will generally occur at the Center after it has closed for the day.

Conduct and Ethics

The reputation of Mimi's Creative Kids is built upon the ethical conduct of our employees, and the overall success of the business is tied to this as well. Our reputation for integrity and excellence requires careful observance of the spirit and letter of applicable laws and regulations, as well as a scrupulous regard for the highest professional standards of conduct and personal integrity.

The Center is dependent upon our families trust, and we are dedicated to preserving that trust. Employees have a duty to the Center and its families to act in a way that will merit the continued trust and confidence of the public.

The Center will comply with all applicable laws and regulations and expects its director and employees to conduct business in accordance with the letter, spirit, and intent of all relevant laws, statues, ordinances, and regulations and to refrain from any illegal, dishonest or unethical conduct.

In general, the use of good judgement, based on high ethical principles, will guide employees with respect to acceptable conduct. When a situation arises where it is difficult to determine the proper course of action, the employees should discuss the matter with the Director.

Compliance with these principles of conduct and ethics is the responsibility of every employee. Disregarding or failing to meet any of the following standards may result in disciplinary action up to and including termination.

Personal Appearance

All employees are expected to present a neat and clean appearance and to dress appropriately for their position and duties. An employee's appearance and dress should reflect the professional nature of the position as well as be functional within the

expectations and responsibilities of the job. Please note that the Center is not responsible for damage to or loss of an employee's articles of clothing, jewelry and/or accessories.

Dress Code

Radical departure from conventional dress or personal grooming is not permitted, as it may serve as a distraction or worse to the children at the Center, parents, and other employees. The following items constitute the basic dress code for employees of the Center. Final determination of the dress code acceptability of an employee's attire shall be determined by the Director.

Unacceptable dress include but is not limited to shorts shorter than the tip of your middle finger, short dresses or skirts above the knee, and jeans with holes or ripped legs- small tears are acceptable, but you should not be able to see skin.

Unacceptable accessories include jewelry which may present a safety hazard such as long necklaces or earrings, piercings other than in the ear, and wild and distracting color and style of hair.

Staff must wear appropriate jeans and comfortable shoes along with uniform shirts. These shirts may be purchased from the Director or provided to you as a deduction in wages. Shirts must be fitting, neither too tight nor too loose.

General Interactions

Employees need to maintain a sense of decorum when interacting with others at the Center and observe rules of proper conduct. Staff are expected to act in a caring, honest, respectful, and responsible manner consistent with the Center's mission statement. Staff should always portray a positive role model by maintaining an attitude of loyalty, patience, courtesy, tact, and maturity. This standard includes refraining from intimate displays of affection towards others in the presence of children, parents, and other staff as well as prohibiting profanity, inappropriate jokes, sharing intimate personal details, or any kind of harassment in the presence of children, parents, or other staff.

Classroom Expectations

You must keep to the class schedule; this is very important. When you do not keep to schedule, it has a domino effect on everyone. Children do well with structure and routines. We need to always interact with the children, singing songs, reading, playing, ect. If you would like to come up with classroom ideas, that is perfectly okay. If you want me to continue furnishing the curriculum, I can but there has to be a schedule of some sorts. Your classroom, library, media room and centers room need to be cleaned back like it was when you entered it. Please ensure the toys are not broken and place the toys where they were. We need to teach the children to take care of things and clean up after themselves. When you are given learning materials, crafts ect. You are expected to do these with your class. Once completed, all extra materials are to be turned back in. Please take care of the items being used. Make sure all work goes home with the child each week.

Gossip, Complaining and Conflict Resolution

Conversations at the center should be of a positive or constructive nature. We are striving to create a pleasant workplace, and this requires the commitment of each staff member. For the sake of others, we ask that you do not "vent" about students, parents, other staff members while at work. Others are not impressed or entertained by your ability to identify flaws and problems.

If there is something bothering you about your job, before bringing it up to others, please consider whether it can be remedied or is simply "part of the job." If appropriate, confront Mimi or your colleague respectfully and ask them to schedule a time when no children are present to discuss how you can resolve the issue. Co workers might not say anything to you. but constant negativity gets old to hear constantly.

If you are having a problem getting along with a coworker or you do not agree with something you were asked to do, you are expected to try to resolve the issue by speaking with the director.

GOSSIPING ABOUT THE CENTER, DIRECTOR, PARENTS, STUDENTS OR OTHER TEACHERS WILL NOT BE TOLERATED.

Employee Online Presence

Employees represent the school in their online community. Employees social media postings that are visible to the public should be of a tasteful and responsible nature. Please observe the following guidelines:

- Photos in which you smoke, use illegal substances, appear to be excessively intoxicated, are not fully dressed, or are engaging in illegal or foolish behavior should not be visible to parents at our school. It is recommended that you set your privacy settings strictly, regularly review the photos others have posted and do not allow photos to be taken of you when would not be appropriate for the public eye.
- Do not connect with school parents unless you have a relationship with them outside of school.
- Do not connect with students on social media
- Do not post photographs or names of students to your personal accounts.
- Do not post disparaging comments about the school, your colleagues, or any students or parents to your personal accounts. The school's policies with regard to harassment, discrimination, confidentiality and gossip extend to your social media accounts
- Do not discuss children and or the center or other staff with parents through social media, or personal cell phones. Only the centers phones are to be used when speaking with a parent.

Phones

Mimi's Creative Kids Learning Center, LLC is committed to safeguarding the children and families that use our facility, and we are aware of the risk that mobile phones and other

devices with camera functionality pose to the children in our care. It is also recognized that mobile phones can cause unnecessary distraction during the working day and can be intrusive when used in the company of others. We balance this risk with the benefits that mobile devices and photographs of children can offer and through observing this policy, all staff and visitors to our setting are contributing to a safe and effective environment.

Where this policy refers to mobile phones, this is also intended to cover any device which may be used to take images, including but not restricted to tablets, smart watches, cameras, and recording equipment. A breach in this policy may lead to disciplinary action; depending on the nature of the breach, it may be considered gross misconduct and result in summary dismissal. The aim of the Mobile Phone Policy is to promote safe and appropriate practice through establishing clear and robust acceptable use guidelines.

This is achieved through balancing protection against potential misuse with recognition that mobile phones are effective communication tools – which in turn can contribute to safeguarding practice and protection.

- All staff and visitors are aware of, and adhere to, their responsibilities under this policy
- Children are safeguarded against potential misuse of digital images
- Staff and Managers are aware of the consequences of breaching this policy

Safe and authorized use of digital images can contribute effectively to the experience of families and potential families from Mimi's Creative Kids. It is appreciated that it can be very difficult to detect when such devices are present or being used, particularly in relation to enhanced functions, such as cameras.

The use of all mobile phones is therefore limited, regardless of their capabilities. The aim is to avoid distraction and disruption of the working day, and to minimize the opportunities for any individual to make and covert images or misuse functions in any other way. Mobile phone usage is not permitted in any playrooms or play areas (“Restricted Area’s”) used by children, regardless of if children are present in these areas as the areas may contain photos of or personal information relating to children. A zero-tolerance policy is in place regarding the use of personal or work-related mobiles by any individual in these areas. Staff are permitted to use their mobile phone in the staff room on breaks when no children are present. The daycare provides a specified location for employees to store their devices.

Mimi's understands that mobile phones play an important role in emergency situations and staff are encouraged to discuss any requirements to have enhanced access to their mobile phone on an individual basis with the manager. Staff may also provide the nursery phone number for use in an emergency. All staff are responsible for the safe and proper implementation of this policy and are expected to challenge any person who is seen using their mobile phone in such a way that breaches this policy.

Staff are reminded of their duty to represent the nursery in a positive manner and any improper mobile phone use whilst identifiable, such as Mimi's Creative Kids Learning Center, LLC employee, may damage the nursery's reputation.

Employees are not permitted to make or receive personal telephone calls during work hours unless authorized to do so by the Director or in the event of an emergency. This includes using any app on a cell phone or completing more than an occasional text message. If a staff member is using their cell phone in the classroom, playground, cafeteria, or anywhere employees oversee students, this is an automatic write up.

When an employee needs to call a parent, our business line should be used rather than a cell phone. Every time you make or receive a business call, you represent not only yourself as a professional educator, but also the Center. Good telephone techniques to follow include:

- Receiving a call, answer promptly, and courteously.
- When making or receiving a call, identify yourself clearly and specifically.
- Keep your conversation business-like and brief, avoiding prolonged chats.
- Transfer incoming calls to the appropriate party courteously and quickly.
- Take messages accurately and relay them to the person who was called.
- Answer questions thoroughly to ensure the caller has received information.
- Close your conversation with a pleasant "Goodbye."

Employees may use their phones to take pictures and check and update HI Mama throughout the day. There are no other acceptable uses of technology during the times when you are responsible for supervising children. As much as possible, these activities should take place at nap time. HI Mama requirements are not to be posted in advance. Take pictures and information and post them to HI Mama during your working lunch. Individual pictures of student and group photos are to be uploaded DAILY - NO EXCEPTIONS. Lesson plans and activities are to be uploaded each Friday afternoon for next week. Morning assessments are to be done each morning.

If you are told to get off your phone while using it for personal use, three times you will have to "check" your phone, watch and/or ear buds each morning before heading to class. There are NO EXCEPTIONS to this rule.

Smoking Policy

Smoke Free Workplace – Policy brief and purpose

Our employee smoking policy outlines our rules regarding smoking in the workplace or on the premises. This policy aims to protect non-smokers without unreasonably depriving smokers from their right to smoke.

Our employees who smoke need to follow this policy so they will:

- Protect non-smokers from second-hand smoking
- Avoid setting off alarms and smoke detectors

- Preserve an image of a clean workplace and a healthy environment for the children in our care.
- Avoid fires from discarded cigarettes

Mimi's Creative Kids will follow all legal guidelines regarding indoor or outdoor smoking mandated by State Minimum Standards. This policy applies to all employees of our company as well as to visitors, contractors and temporary staff.

Policy Elements

Our policy refers to all tobacco products. As a rule, smoking is NOT allowed anywhere on the premises, including employee automobiles.

Each employee will be allowed (1) one (15) fifteen-minute break in the morning and (1) one (15) fifteen-minute break in the afternoon where they may leave the premises to smoke. Please make sure to wash your hands once you return to keep from exposing the children to secondhand smoke.

If an employee is caught smoking when not on break or on the premises, they will receive a write up and upon the (3rd) write up termination.

Personnel Records

A confidential file will be maintained on each employee containing all employment-related documents such as the employment application, resume, job and salary history, performance appraisals, disciplinary action, general correspondence, and other documents that pertain to employment at the Center. To comply with the Americans with Disabilities Act, the Center keeps all medically related information in a separate confidential file. Any false statements made by employees on their employment applications or personnel records will result in disciplinary action, up to and including termination.

An employee may have SUPERVISED access to her or his file during normal business hours upon request to the Director. Personnel files may not be removed from the office. Employees are prohibited from removing any documents from their personnel file. Employees may only add documentation to their personnel file with the permission of the Director.

Disciplinary Process

If an employee is found to be in violation of one or more policies outlined in this handbook, the disciplinary process may be initiated. While this is generally a process of escalating actions, certain violations may be more egregious in their severity, frequency of occurrence, and/or scope and thus could warrant a disciplinary action higher on the list, up to and including termination of duties. The determination of the specific disciplinary action to be undertaken is at the discretion of the Director and will be appropriate to the nature of the offenses.

Reprimand

A reprimand may be given to any employee when a minor violation of the Center policies or procedures has occurred. A reprimand may be either verbal or written. Verbal reprimands will be documented by the Director, and the documentation will be placed in the employee personnel file. Written reprimands will include brief documentation of the incident and the date on which it occurred. Written reprimands require that a copy of the written reprimand be given to the employee, and a copy of the reprimand signed by the employees to acknowledge receipt of the document must be placed in the employee's file.

Written Warning

For more serious violations of policies and procedures or repeated minor violations, an employee may be given a written warning. The written warning will clearly describe the deficiency in the performance or conduct and will cite the policy, licensing regulation, or procedure violated. The written warning will contain a corrective action plan, outlining the necessary action to correct the deficiency and a timetable in which the corrective action must occur.

A copy of the written warning and the corrective action plan will be given to the employee. Employees are required to sign a copy of the written warning, acknowledging it receipt, which will then be placed in the employee's personnel file. Signing the written warning does not indicate that the employee agrees with the contents; it simply indicates receipt of a copy of the written warning. Failure or refusal to sign the written warning will be considered insubordination and will result in disciplinary action up to and including termination.

Copies of all documentation regarding corrective action plans will be retained by the Director.

Termination

Involuntary termination does not necessarily require prior verbal or written disciplinary action. The Center, in accordance with Texas law, is an "at-will" employer and may terminate the employment relationship at any time with or without cause and without notice. This policy is to be used as a guide for employees but is not inclusive of all possible reasons or causes for termination from employment. Termination is an action which must be approved by the Director. Notification of Termination may be written or verbal.

Causes for involuntary termination include, but are not limited to the following:

- Unsatisfactory provisional period
- Falsifying or misusing records, including application.
- Violation of confidentiality rules/Violation of the Substance Abuse Policy
- Theft or misuse of the Center funds, equipment, or property
- Absence from work without notification and/or approval per policies
- Discourteous treatment of the public, families or co workers

- Inappropriate behavior
- Non-performance of duties resulting in injury to Center, children, or others
- Being abusive or neglectful to children, parents, or employees
- Failure to submit required documentation within the mandated time frame.
- Neglect of duty or refusal to comply with directives from Director.
- Misuse of leave policies
- Receipt of 2 write ups of the same infraction during a 12-month period
- Receipt of 3 written warnings for any violations during any 12-month period; the date of the third warning will be the employees' last day of employment.
- Failure to return to work following a leave of absence.
- Failure to meet deadlines as presented by the Director.

Employees who are involuntarily terminated shall forfeit all accrued vacation time and other benefits. Once employment has been terminated under this action, the employee is expected to return any keys and other property of the Center to the Director and leave the Center at that time. The former employee will be escorted out of the building and is no longer permitted at the Center. Any of the former employee's personal property or effects which remain at the Center will be packed and shipped to the former employee's home address. The former employee's final paycheck will be mailed to that address as well and may not be picked up at the Center. All final paychecks will be sent on scheduled paydays for the pay period applicable for the hours worked.

General Duties

This section of the handbook details the basic duties, expectations, and general policies for all employees. This is not all-inclusive of all possible duties which may be assigned; these are basic guidelines to follow. Please note that classroom-specific policies are contained in another section of this handbook.

Center Operation

These policies govern specific expectations for the Center's day-to-day operations. Many procedures are explained in greater depth in the classroom binders or are posted to specific classrooms.

Opening/Closing Procedures

Staff are expected to know the standard opening and closing procedures for the Center and for their specific classrooms. These procedures are listed on the opening and closing form, located in each classroom's binder. Please note that these are specific duties which must

be completed and indicated as such each day as noted. If one or more of these duties have not been completed in a day, the staff member should notify the Director/Assistant of the deficiency.

Children's Health while at Center

Mimi's Creative Kids takes the health of the children in our care very seriously. The policies below are our general expectations and procedures for various situations while in care at the facility.

Food and Meals

Meals are an important time for children. It is a social time as well as a time for nutrition. As you will be eating the same meals as the children, your attitude about food and meals will be reflected in the children. Your manners and etiquette are important. You teach by example. Our menus are created to meet state nutrition guidelines and to provide healthy choices for the children.

Food Handling Policy

Mimi's Creative Kids follows Texas' minimum standards for food handling, as required by law. When handling food, make sure to wash your hands with soap and water. Each utensil can only be used for one food. If the same type of utensil is needed for a second food, a new utensil must be used (the utensils cannot be shared between two dishes). The entire meal must be placed on the table prior to a child sitting in front of his/her plate. ***Loss of meal and/or snack privileges may NOT be used as part of any disciplinary process.***

Meal Patterns

Each age group has different serving size requirements, as noted on the menu. These serving sizes are determined by state guidelines. The first serving offered to each child must constitute a full serving for that child's age group. Milk must be measured as well. Even if the child insists that he or she does not like a food, a full first serving must be given to the child.

Infant and toddler meal procedures

Infants who are bottle fed must be held for feeding. Infants who can eat solids must be fed with a spoon by a teacher. Toddlers who can eat on their own should be encouraged to do so. Make sure a bib or extra T-shirt is put on the child prior to the meal, as this can be messy. Food for the toddlers should be cut in pieces no larger than 1 inch in size.

Illness

Illnesses don't just affect the child who is ill; anyone who meets the child may also contract the illness. As such, employees must be aware of how to recognize the signs and symptoms of possible illness, and how to address those situations when they occur. If a child shows signs of illness, those symptoms should be reported immediately to the Director. In some cases, the child will be sent home until the illness has passed.

Recognizing:

A child who shows any sign of the following should be reported to the Director for observations:

- Fever above 99.5
- Vomiting
- Rash (other than heat or diaper)
- Diarrhea
- Infectious mucus (green)
- Conjunctivitis (pink eye)
- Breathing difficulties

This is not an all-inclusive list. Please refer to the care sheet in your classroom binder for the complete list of symptoms which need to be reported.

Procedures for Sick Children

Once a sick child's symptoms have been reported to the Director, a determination will be made as to whether the child should be sent home. Staff should not make the initial determination. If the child is determined to be sick, the parent(s) of the child will be contacted and informed to pick the child up from the Center. The child will remain separated from the other children at the Center until he/she is picked up. If a sick child is sent home, the child will be allowed to return until either the child no longer has the symptoms, begins a course of treatment for the illness, or otherwise appears to be well enough to attend the Center. A child sent home after 12 pm will generally not be allowed to return the following day.

Allergies

Some of the children under your care may have allergies to specific foods or other allergens. It is your responsibility to be aware of these allergies and take appropriate precautionary measures to ensure the health and safety of those children. Any allergies will be noted in the classroom binder.

Food Allergies: If any children in your classroom have a food allergy (milk, peanuts, etc) great precautions should be taken to not accidentally serve the child this food. In some cases, the food item will not be offered on the menu at all.

Asthma: Can be triggered by allergies. If you have animals at home, the child may have a reaction to your clothing. It may be helpful to change into other clothes upon your arrival at the Center or wear an apron so that exposure is limited. The use of perfume or air freshener, extremely hot or cold weather, seasonal allergies (pollen), and dust can also trigger an asthma attack. Immediately notify the Director if a child is having breathing difficulties.

Other allergens: Children may have other types of allergies. Specific precautionary measures will be provided as needed in the classroom binder.

Diapering - See attached sheet for minimum standard requirements.

Hand Washing - See attached sheet for minimum standard requirements.

Emergency Situations - See attached sheet for minimum standard requirements.

Child Safety Accidents

Accidents or injuries involving children must be reported immediately to the Director. Employees should not contact the parents until the Director has been notified of the accident. Employees will be advised by the Director to call the child's parents to apprise them of the incident/accident as necessary. If an accident causes the child to bruise or bleed, the parent will be notified immediately once the Director has been informed of the incident, even if the accident is not serious. It is important to think about how you would feel if you picked your child up at the end of the day and you were not notified of a bruise or serious cut. When an accident involving one of the children under our care occurs, the employee must fill out an Accident/Injury Report immediately following the incident. Once filled out, it must be given to the Assistant, and two copies will be made. One copy will be given to the Director and will be placed in the child's classroom file. The other copy must be signed by and given to the parents within 24 hours following the incident/accident. Accidents involving parents or visitors must be reported immediately to the Director. Employees are required to complete Accident/Injury reports for these incidents. The report will be given to the Director. The document will become part of the agency's records. Any employee who fails to appropriately report an accident or injury, or who purposefully files a false report will be subject to disciplinary action up to and including termination.

Other Emergencies

While no policy can cover every contingency, you are expected to follow all rules from CPR and First Aid training, as well as Universal Precautions, in any emergency which may necessitate the use of such training. When blood or other bodily fluids are involved, you are expected to use gloves in handling the situation. If immediate medical attention is needed for a child or another staff member, call 911 before administering assistance, whenever possible.

Behavioral Incidents

Behavioral incidents between children may also occur where one child hurts or attempts to hurt another child at the Center, and the incident leaves a mark. While some of these are relatively mild, all such incidents should be documented as noted:

Behavioral Incident (General)

This kind of incident usually involves two or more children engaging in behavior against one another which would not be considered acceptable - e.g., Child A throws a toy at Child B, leaving a mark. The incident must be documented for both children. Identifying information for each child involved should only be placed on that child's form - in the example above,

the name of Child A (who threw the toy) would only go on Child A's form. The name of Child B would only go on Child B's form. Under no circumstances are employees allowed to acknowledge which child hurt another in writing, verbally or non-verbally (pointing, nodding one's head etc).

Biting Incident

This kind of incident is documented separately for children 3 and under. All other ages should use the Behavioral incident form instead. As with the previous form, the Biting Incident must be documented for both children, withholding the identifying information as noted above. If the bite draws blood, the Director needs to be notified immediately, regardless of the age of the children involved.

Abuse and neglect

While Mimi's Creative Kids provides a safe environment for children, other types of harm may come to a child despite our best precautions. In particular, the abuse or neglect of a child is of paramount concern.

To this end, all staff are required to read and sign all policies relating to identifying, documenting, and reporting child abuse. Mandatory training sessions on the subject are required. Mandated reporting of Suspected child Abuse and Neglect Under the Child Protective Services Act, mandated reporters are required to report any suspicion of abuse or neglect to the appropriate authorities. ALL EMPLOYEES of Mimi's Creative Kids are considered mandated reporters in this context.

In the case of suspected abuse or neglect, you are asked to inform the Director prior to making a report to Child Protective Services. If you feel that the Director is not adequately protecting the child, you can call the number listed below and report the incident anonymously. Remember that abuse and neglect are serious allegations.

Guidelines

The following guidelines contain information relating to child abuse. It is extremely important to make yourself familiar with the information, especially the parts pertaining to the characteristics of battered children and the indicators of child neglect. If you have any suspicions or concerns regarding a child, please get in touch with the Director and begin to keep a record of items which may indicate abuse of the child.

General reasons for reporting suspected child abuse/neglect, include, but are not limited to:

- Unusual bruising, marks, or cuts on the child's body
- Witnessing severe verbal reprimands from the parent
- Improper clothing relating to size, cleanliness, season
- Transporting a child without appropriate child restraints (e.g. car seats, seat belts)

- Dropping off/picking up a child while under the influence of illegal drugs/alcohol
- Not providing appropriate meals, including a drink for the child
- Leaving a child unattended for any amount of time
- Failure to attend to the special needs of a disabled child
- Sending a sick child to school over-medicated to hide symptoms which would typically require the child to be kept at home until symptoms subside
- Children who exhibit other behavior consistent with an abusive situation

Characteristics of Battered Children

Abused children endure life as if they are alone in a dangerous world, with no real hope of safety. Feeling unprotected, abused children try to protect themselves in any way then can. When a child has been injured and is brought for treatment, the child usually appears to:

- Have no close feeling or affection with parents or other people
- Be fearful or quiet
- Show no reaction to pain or expectation of being comforted

Having had violent physical contact with adults in the past, the child is often wary of physical contact initiated by an adult. When admitted to a hospital ward, the battered child seems less afraid than other children and settles in quickly. When other children cry, the battered child becomes apprehensive and watches them with curiosity. The battered child will also become apprehensive when an adult approaches the crying child. While in a new situation, the child seeks safety in sizing up the situation and being alert for danger. Children who have been battered do not generally behave as a typical child do. They display many adult-like reactions.

Indicators of Child Neglect

Neglect is a form of abuse. There are various characteristics that can describe child neglect in general, but for clarity, neglect can be divided into two subgroups - physical and emotional neglect. These two aspects contribute to each other and rarely occur separately. The following are characteristics that may indicate physical neglect:

- Malnourished
- Ill-clad or dirty
- Overcrowded or unhealthy sleeping arrangements
- Receiving inadequate supervision

Many of the above-mentioned characteristics may also indicate emotional neglect, along with:

- Insecurity, seemingly withdrawn or overaggressive

- Constant friction in the home
- Denied normal nurturance
- Failure to attend school regularly
- Exposure to unwholesome and
- Demoralizing circumstances

Reporting Child Abuse

In Texas, child Protective Services (CPS) investigates reports of suspected child abuse and neglect. CPS staff are available to receive referrals at the local district office at any hour. CPS accepts all reports of suspected child abuse and neglect and other referrals in writing, by telephone, and in person from all sources, including identified sources, news media, anonymous sources, sources that have incomplete information, and referrals from the child or parent.

To contact Texas Child Protective Services,
please call 1-800-252-5400

Classroom Management and Curriculum

This section of the handbook deals with policies governing our classrooms, as well as information about our curriculum and how to contribute to it.

General Classroom Procedures and Guidelines

The following are general principles and rules to follow with the children in your classroom. From the moment a child arrives at the Center to the moment the child leaves the Center's property; we have a responsibility to ensure the child's safety and to appropriately conduct ourselves around the children and others.

Children Entering/Exiting the Building

It is your responsibility to make sure that the children do not leave the building without an authorized, responsible adult. No child should be playing in the parking lot alone. We are responsible for the child until the family drives off our property. Even if the family member says it is ok, it isn't. Just simply tell the parent that the child's safety is our concern, and that the child cannot leave the building without an accompanying adult.

Child Drop Off and Pick Up

You need to be prepared when parents drop off children and pick them up. The following procedures are designed to ensure a certain level of interaction each day with our families and promote a consistent process for parents, children, and employees.

Drop off

When a child is dropped off at the Center, please do the following.

- Greet the family upon their arrival
- For families who receive Childcare Services assistance, remind the parent to clock in properly.
- Each day a basic health check should be conducted on each child upon arrival, noting any fever, bumps, bruises, burns and other signs and symptoms of ill health. Questions and comments about anything noted should be addressed to the parent or child in a non-threatening way. Any questionable marks or responses should be documented in writing and submitted to the Director.
- Obtain information that will help you care for the child, e.g. "When is the last time he had a bottle?" "How did she sleep last night?" "Did you have fun with whatever activity you planned yesterday?" *Help the child say goodbye and get the child involved in an activity.
- Be sure to mark down that the child has attended that day and make notes for the afternoon teacher about the child if needed.
- If the child has any medications, these should be given to the Director at this time to be placed in the lock box.

Pick Up

When a child is picked up at the center, please do the following:

- Greet the family upon their arrival
- If you are unsure of the identity of the person who has arrived at pick up the child, check the adult's identification card against the pickup list, even if the child seems to know the adult. Only those individuals formally authorized in writing by the parent/guardian are permitted to take a child from the Center. This is further discussed below.
- Tell the family about something good that happened. Discuss challenges, but don't make it a habit of making the family feel bad about the child's behavior.
- Make sure the family has all papers, projects, notes, etc that are intended to go home with the child.
- For families who receive Childcare Services assistance, remind the parent to clock out properly.
- Say goodbye

Pick Up Permission List

Each child has a pickup permission list on file (located in each classroom binder) where the parent has given express written authorization and consent for individuals on the list to pick

up the child. Unsigned changes to the permission list or changes submitted verbally, via telephone, or any other method of communication other than a signed change to the document will not be considered valid, and the child will not be released to any individual who has been added in any of those ways. All changes must be authorized by the Director and must be made in person, and the parent must sign and date the form to reflect the current list. As noted previously, any person who is on the list but not known by the staff member caring for the child, will need to show a valid identification card in order to pick up the child. If the person has no identification card, someone else will have to be contacted to pick up the child. Keep in mind that some individuals may not be allowed to have contact with the child through court order, and the Center will have a copy of that order and note this on the pickup permission list.

UNDER NO CIRCUMSTANCES IS A CHILD TO LEAVE THE CENTER WITH SOMEONE WHO IS NOT ON THE PERMISSION LIST

Employees who release a child to a person who is not on the pickup list will be subject to immediate termination.

Field Trips

From time to time, field trips may be planned to enrich the learning experiences of our children. You may suggest and plan field trips as appropriate. All field trips must be approved in advance by the Director, and information about the specifics for the trip (when, where, cost, travel arrangements) must be submitted before approval can be granted. Written permission from a child's parent is needed prior to the child going on the field trip. In addition, the Center must post the specifics of the field trip 24 hours prior to the trip, and it must remain posted until they return from the field trip. The classroom binder and the first aid kit must be brought on all field trips.

Child Interaction

While general guidelines for interacting with children are in the preceding section, this covers a few more specific items. The children are our number one priority. Make sure that you make time each day for going outside, a large motor skill activity, a small motor skill activity, a small group activity and a large group activity. The curriculum and class schedule we have developed will help you with this. Make time for positive attention, many hugs and praise. Have plenty of eye contact - bend down to their level and talk to them. Don't yell across the room if possible. Be involved with what the children are doing. Take the time to work on puzzles with them, talking with them, and engaging in other appropriate activities. Be a part of the things that they do. At no time should any staff person be alone with a single child where the staff member cannot be observed by others. You should always take care in such situations to position yourself so that other staff can see you. In addition, no staff member shall ever leave a child unsupervised.

Restroom Supervision

You must ensure that the restroom is not occupied by anyone (suspicious/unknown individuals) before allowing a child to use the facilities. You should stand in the doorway of

the restroom while the child is using the facilities to ensure privacy for the children and protect yourself (not being alone with a child). When you assist younger children, the doors to the facility must remain open. No child, regardless of age, shall enter a restroom alone on field trips or at other off-site locations. Children should always be sent in threes and, whenever possible, with a staff member. Private activities (diapering, changing clothing, putting on swimwear, taking showers etc) should be conducted or supervised in pairs. When this is not feasible, you should position yourself to be visible to others.

Abuse

You shall not abuse children in any way, including:

- Physical abuse - striking, spanking, shaking, slapping etc
- Verbal abuse - using words that threaten, humiliate, degrade etc.
- Sexual abuse - touching or speaking inappropriately
- Mental abuse - shaming, withholding kindness, being cruel, etc
- Neglect - withholding food, water, or any other type of basic care

Parent Interaction

While general guidelines for interacting with parents (and other members of the public) are in the preceding sections, these cover a few, more specific items.

- In general, talk to parents whenever possible. We always need to maintain open lines of communication with them.
- Daily communication is required, as noted in the Drop Off and Pick Up procedures.
- Take every opportunity to discuss with the parent what positive things the child has done that day.
- If there has been a behavioral issue, try not discussing the child's negative behavior in front of the child (or other children and families). Ask another teacher or the Director to watch your class while you talk with the parents. Be sure to emphasize how you addressed the situation (as discussed later in this section). To maintain a good rapport with our families, we conduct parent/teacher conferences twice a year, generally once in the fall and once in the spring. Portfolios and classroom notes are kept documenting the child's weekly progress and can be compared with the child's later work. This allows us to discuss the child's overall progress with the parents.

Snacking/Drinking

Discreet snacking in the classroom is permitted, as is drinking water or soda. Please keep such snacks and drinks out of the reach of any children in the room. Employees should not share their own snacks and drinks with the children.

Naptime

Naptime/quiet time runs daily from 12:00-2:00 Center-wide. It is important to find ways to wind down the room prior to putting the children on their cots. Switch the music to soothing sounds. You might read a story or a chapter from a chapter book. Once they are on their cots, cover the children and make them comfortable. Turn out the lights and say, "Good Night". After half an hour, non-sleeping children should be offered a naptime bag and a book. Naptime bags have a variety of materials in them to keep children's minds and hands busy at quiet time. These are reserved for children who are still awake after 30 minutes of quiet time or for children who do sleep but wake up early.

Classroom Observers

At times, observers will visit your classroom. Please treat them with respect- your actions reflect on the Center as a whole. Answer questions to the best of your ability, but don't speculate answers to questions to which you do not know the answer. Remember that any time there is an observer, your classroom should run as scheduled. The children come first. Some of the people who may visit are:

Administration (Director)	CCDF (Childcare Development Fund)
Paths to Quality	Parents
CCR&R (Childcare Resource and Referral Services)	FSSA (Family and Social Services)
Licensing Consultant	CACFP (Child Food Program)
Other accrediting agencies	Students (practicum)

Some of these agencies and individuals are there to ensure that we follow state and other regulations regarding childcare centers. Others may observe your classroom for different reasons - to learn more about the Center, learn more about childcare in general, or provide other accreditations.

Your classroom

There are many components that go into making your classroom a safe and fun learning environment for the children at Mimi's Creative Kids you will be provided with a wide range of materials to help you maintain and develop appropriate lessons and curriculum for the children in your classroom, along with other items containing important information about the children under your care.

Classroom Binders

Each classroom has a binder with specific information about the children assigned to that classroom, as well as listing policies and procedures for the Center.

Some of the information includes:

Child Information

Before you watch children on your own in a classroom, you need to know the names, ages, and specific needs of each child assigned to that classroom. There is an information sheet in the binder for each child. Make sure you read about their likes and dislikes, fears, security or cuddle items, allergies, etc. You will need to know the things on that sheet so you can better care for the children.

Pick Up Permission List

As noted in the previous section, this is a list of people who have been approved to pick up a child.

Emergency Information

Each child has an information sheet in the binder with contact information for that child.

Daily Schedules and Routines

A daily schedule allows the children to know what is coming next. It helps to build a classroom routine for the children. A daily schedule allows for outside play, meals, snacks, free play, small group play, and large group play. Each schedule must be posted in plain view. It is understandable that at times your schedule will vary from what is posted but in general you should follow your schedule. If you come into your classroom later in the day to take over duties from another teacher, be sure to find out what events may have already occurred that day or other information which you may need to be aware of. This includes things like:

- New medication for a child
- Parent communications
- Diapering
- Feeding
- Alterations to or omission of lessons
- Other significant events

Classroom Learning Centers

Each classroom's layout is slightly different, but all of them contain the following Learning Centers (at a minimum):

Music	Art Center	Playdough Table
Block Center	Reading Center	Math/Manipulative Center
Science Center	Dramatic Play Center	Discovery Table
Writing Center	Quiet Area/Alone Spot	Easel

These Learning Centers are required to be present within the classroom, in accordance with state guidelines. The learning centers are used in the activities developed for the curriculum within each classroom.

Curriculum

At Mimi's Creative kids, our curriculum encourages learning through play, using a variety of activities and techniques to reach goals. Our developmentally appropriate curriculum provides for the whole child; it combines physical, emotional, social, and cognitive learning through an integrated approach. Each of these domains is interconnected and impacts the others. Children learn by doing. Through active involvement with their environment, children attempt to make sense of the world around them. They learn by exploring their environment through hands-on experience. Teaching young children is a creative process. An early childhood curriculum provides the framework for what happens in a planned environment where children interact with materials, peers, and adults. The primary teaching goal is to help capable learners. They will acquire the skills and abilities needed for a lifetime of learning through carefully planned, developmentally appropriate activities arranged by the teachers. When a learning environment encourages exploration and discovery, children develop a sense of trust and belonging. They feel important and valued when others listen to them, seek out their ideas, and allow them to express themselves. This type of environment is considered hands-on or learning through play. Children in our classrooms are encouraged to discover things on their own. They learn by exploring the actual objects we talk about. The teachers inspire the children by asking open-ended questions and finding new ways to teach new things within the subject area.

Developmentally Appropriate Practices

Our teachers use developmentally appropriate practices to nurture the social, emotional, physical, and cognitive development of each child. The theories of early childhood education are used to implement the curriculum. Assessments are done to identify the strengths of each child as well as the needs of each child. These assessments help us tailor the curriculum to the needs of each classroom.

Age Appropriateness

Human development research indicates that there are universal, predictable sequences of growth and change that occur in children during the first nine years of life. These predictable changes occur in all domains of development - physical, cognitive, emotional, and social. Knowledge of the typical development of children within the age span served by our programs provides the framework from which teachers prepare the learning environment and plan appropriate experiences.

Individual Appropriateness

Each child is a unique person with an individual pattern and timing of growth, as well as an individual personality, learning style and family background. Both the curriculum and adults' interactions with the children should be responsible for those individual differences.

Learning in young children is the result of interaction between the child's thoughts and experiences with materials, ideas, and people.

Themes

Each month the entire daycare focuses on one general theme or concept (camping, the zoo etc). The group activities are themed as well. Individual teachers are encouraged to base their classroom's appearance and activities on them. Lesson Plans: Lesson plans are weekly lists of activities and goals that make up the curriculum. Lesson plans will be prepared by each teacher and turned into the Assistant by Friday of the third week of each month for the upcoming month. A lesson plan dictates the week's events briefly. A lesson plan should cover every subject area. Each area should have a new item added every week to teach the classroom objectives.

Other Activities

Outside Play:

The playyard is meant to be an extension of our classroom. The items that are in the classroom are items that can be adapted for outside use. For instance: the easel. Typically, an easel is set up in the classroom, but outside it becomes a different experience for the children. The same goes for the discovery table, dress up, dramatic play, blocks, science, etc. Outside we also play games and best of all we get to do lots of things that are unacceptable inside, like yelling and running.

Gross Motor Play:

Gross motor play develops and builds larger motor skills (walking, crawling, running, jumping, climbing, etc). Children develop these skills outside while using the play equipment, running, taking walks, and inside by exercising, climbing on the soft blocks, and climbing in the ball pit. These skills are important in many ways. The children develop large muscle movements that ultimately translate into beginning writing skills. Children grow from the trunk of their bodies out to their fingers. They need to master large movements before they can master the small ones. Teachers can facilitate play by planning games and exercises.

Circle Time:

Circle time is a large group activity. The teacher will lead the class in morning prayer and pledge of allegiance. During circle time, children learn about the days of the week, the months, the weather (and weather predictions), the alphabet, and counting. The children also find out their jobs of the day. The teacher generally reads a current story as well.

Discipline

Mimi's Creative Kids is committed to providing a safe, happy, and nurturing environment for the children in our care. Our goal is to help each child grow to his/her potential and participate in our community at the Center and ultimately, in the community overall. As with any community, large or small, rules are necessary to ensure smooth functioning and to

reduce conflict. With children, it can be difficult to enforce these rules without appropriate strategies of behavior management to create a sense of discipline. Before we continue, two terms need to be specifically defined to understand our approach to behavior management.

Discipline

The ongoing process of helping children develop self-control for self-management while protecting and maintaining the integrity of the child.

Punishments

The use of negative consequences to correct unacceptable behavior. Each child potentially presents a unique behavioral challenge, and thus we deal with each situation and circumstance individually. The techniques we use are designed to help the child take responsibility for his/her actions by teaching appropriate behaviors and when the child acts inappropriately, using positive redirection and reinforcement. Harsh, humiliating, and shaming techniques are counter-productive in most cases, and are thus not used. Time out and other isolation strategies are rarely used.

Positive Discipline Strategies

In circumstances where discipline is necessary, positive techniques of guidance should be used, including redirection, encouragement, and positive reinforcement, rather than competition, comparison, and criticism. Age-appropriate expectations and guidelines should be used to minimize the need for discipline.

- **Develop appropriate limits** that protect children's health and safety, teach self-control, and are meaningful. Limits should be stated firmly, positively, and with respect. Some teachers have basic rules: You may not hurt yourself, others, or things.
- **Be clear about rules.** Consistent and fair rules help children control their own behavior. Rules should be kept simple, few, truly necessary, and reasonable for the age of the child. Reasons for the rules and limits should be given. Communicate your expectations clearly.
- **Ignore minor misbehavior.** Some children misbehave because they are seeking attention. Find out why a misbehaving child is seeking attention. Encourage the child to voice feelings. Encourage more acceptable behavior. This strategy takes time before results are felt, but the result is well worth the effort and time.
- **Distract or redirect children from potential problems.** Be ready to step in to shift a child's attention or add a new activity to divert a problem before it gets out of control. Change something about the problem situation. If a child is yelling, whisper something in his/her ear. If two children are fighting over a toy, offer another type. Ask the children to visit the "peace table or area" to talk over issues and come up with a resolution to their conflict.
- **Use suggestions phrased as a request or question whenever possible.** Get the child to actively consider alternatives to the behavior. "Instead of hitting your friend when she takes your shovel, what could you do?"

- **Use "no choice" statements when you expect a child to do something.** "When you clean up your area, we will be ready to go outside."
- **Make "I" statements** to children which focus on the behavior and consequences, leaving out blame.
 - Describe the behavior. "When you walked off by yourself..."
 - State your concerns about the consequences of the behavior produced in you. "I was so worried that something happened to you because I did not know where you were."
- **Deliver logical consequences.** Give the child a choice, then accept the choice and communicate your acceptance. An example: While on the playground, a child takes off his shoes and gets up to play. You can say, "You can either put your shoes on and play with your friends, or you may sit here so you won't hurt your feet." If the child chooses to sit, then say, "I see you want to sit. Please make sure you don't get up without your shoes on."
- **Remove the child from the group only when necessary.** When a child continues to make unwise choices and refuses to follow directions after all other guidance techniques have been attempted, ask the child to choose a quiet toy and play at the table. The child may also choose to go to the "quiet area" to regain control. Explain to the child that when he/she has gained self-control, he/she may return to the group. Allow the child to decide when he/she is ready to return to play. When a child asks to return to play, ask 3 questions:
 - "Do you know why I asked you to take a break?"
 - "What were you doing?" (Throwing blocks)
 - "What are going to do now?" (Build with the blocks)

When the child answers questions, say to the child. "I see that you understand why you were taking a break and that you know what you should be doing. I am going to trust that you will play appropriately now."

Remove the child from the environment only when necessary. When a child is hurting him/herself, others, or things and cannot be redirected, call the Director for additional help and intervention. The director will decide if the child needs to be removed from the room for a short period of time.

Sending the child home for inappropriate behavior or releasing the child from the Center. Only the director can make the decision to send a child home or release the child from the center.

Some additional important tips:

- Supervision is your best preventive technique. Be aware of all children and what they are doing.

- The teacher sets the example for appropriate play. Remember that children look at you as a role model. You should interact with the children in a positive manner, discuss their play, and play with them.
- Children who are engaged in developmental activities and receive positive reinforcements seldom need redirection. If you are having extreme behaviors, examine the classroom, your activities, and your guidance techniques.
- Remember children respond much better if their feelings are respected and addressed!

Receipt Acknowledgement For Handbook

I have read and been informed about the content, requirements, and expectations of the handbook policy and procedures for employees at Mimi's Creative Kids, LLC. I have received a copy of the policy and agree to abide by the policy guidelines.

I understand that if I have questions, at any time, regarding the handbook, I will consult with my Director/Assistant.

Please read the handbook carefully to ensure that you understand the policy and procedures before signing this document.

Signature: _____

Printed Name: _____

Date: _____