

# Circle Time Pre-School and Child Care

Owned and operated by Donna Pennoyer

PLEASE MOM AND DAD...

My hands are small. I don't mean to spill my milk.

My legs are short-please slow down so I can keep up with you.

Don't slap my hands when I touch something bright and pretty-I don't understand.

Please look at me when I talk to you-it lets me know you are really listening.

My feelings are tender-Don't nag me all day-let me make mistakes without feeling stupid.

Don't expect the bed I make or the picture I draw to be perfect- just love me for trying.

Remember I am a child not a small adult- sometimes I don't understand what you are saying.

I love you so much- please love me just for being me- not just for the things I can do.

Welcome to Circle Time Preschool and Childcare.

This handbook covers all of my childcare philosophies, business policies and expectations. Please read this handbook carefully, and feel free to discuss with me any questions that you may have.

## **ADMISSION REQUIREMENT**

Children must be between 6 weeks and 6 years of age.

## **CENTER HOURS**

We are open at 7:00 a.m. and close at 5:30 p.m.

## **MISSION STATEMENT**

Circle Time Preschool and Child Care's mission is to enrich the quality of family life by providing peace of mind to parents and by enhancing the life experiences of the children in our care.

## **OUR CHILD CARE PHILOSOPHY**

Each child is an individual. We, here at Circle Time Preschool and Childcare, feel that meeting each child's needs is essential for growth. We are sensitive to a child's social, emotional, intellectual, and physical needs. Circle Time provides a literature based program through constant exposure to books, poems, songs and the written language. We also offer opportunities for children to explore, create, play and succeed with the use of activity centers, each with a different focus, such as art, science, and dramatic play areas.

Children have different learning styles and pass through the stages at different times. Our multi-level center provides children with the opportunities to develop concrete thinking and social skills as well as to create a positive self image.

Learning is an active process. Children learn through repeated exposure, role modeling by peers and adults, and the opportunity to apply and practice what they have learned. The use of hands-on experiences allows children to manipulate and investigate their surroundings. Using hands-on and manipulative materials in the classroom provides children with the opportunity to explore and create their own method of learning.

Our role, as educators, is to be a dynamic link between the children and the classroom and to create an environment which allows children to:

- Be successful
- Develop a positive self esteem
- Grow through decision making
- Create the skills and knowledge necessary to interact with others
- Relate their skills to their day-to-day experiences
- Establish a love for learning

As teachers, we present concrete models and experiences to help children visualize an idea or concept. We use the classroom environment to build communication skills, develop creative thinking, teach problem solving and develop the use of judgment..

Through the learning process, education prepares the children socially, emotionally and mentally for the challenges of life.

### **THE CENTER'S GOAL**

Our goal is to provide all of the children in the care of Circle Time with a clean, safe, loving, nurturing and interactive environment: where they can play and learn. Your child will thrive in our loving and caring environment, and develop into responsible considerate and contributing members of society. The skills and knowledge children learn today play a major role in determining who they'll be tomorrow. We believe in the value of both structured and flexible schedules. Structured activities will include the use of a preschool curriculum, regular reading times, arts and crafts, math and science, nutrition, language development, and social and musical activities. Some of the more flexible activities we offer are outdoor play, free play, listening to books on cds and song cds, and educational videos. The most important priority is to have FUN!

### **ENROLLMENT POLICY**

There are several forms that must be completed and on file before we can assume the responsibility of caring for your child. NO EXCEPTIONS. This is to ensure that your child will get the very best care possible from us. The following must be completed and turned into the director before your child can attend.

- Admission and Registration Forms
- Contract and Rate agreement (signed by both parents)
- Emergency Contacts
- Emergency Medical Authorization Form
- Health Examination Form or letter from the doctor
- Index care Card/Emergency Card
- Parent Authorization for the Administration of Medication
- Payments for tuition
- Up to date immunization record

The following is a list policies and permissions forms that need to be acknowledged on the last page of the registration forms:

- Biting Policy
- Discipline Policy
- Eating Policy
- Field trip permission slip form
- Handbook acknowledgement form
- Lunches and extra activities are the parents financial responsibility
- Payment policies for weekly tuition, absences late pick up fees and late payment fees
- Photo release form for Circle Time Childcare to use photos in the classroom
- Photo release form for Circle Time Childcare to use photos on our web site
- Our outdoor policy
- Withdrawal policy

#### **ENROLLMENT PROCEDURE**

The enrollment procedure includes a one-hour (minimum) visit in the classroom by the child. The best time for a visit is between 8:30-11:00 a.m. Other arrangements are available to accommodate family needs. Further visits may be scheduled if necessary.

#### **NON - DISCRIMINATION POLICY**

The center does not discriminate on the basis of sex, race, religion, ethnicity, national origin, or disability. If however, the nature of a child's handicap requires special therapy or special staffing, the child will not be enrolled until special arrangements can be made.

#### **ATTENDANCE POLICY**

Fees are determined by enrollment, not attendance. Our expenses continue whether or not your child attends. When you register, you are buying a time slot; therefore, you are financially responsible for that slot whether or not your child attends. This includes illnesses, personal vacations, school vacations, or school closings. No monetary deductions or exchanges in days will be made if, for any reason, your child does not attend.

#### **WAITING LIST**

Your name will be put on a waiting list at no charge. As classroom openings become available, parents will be notified and given the opportunity to accept the opening or to continue to keep their name on the waiting list. If a slot becomes available and you want to reserve it and have your child start at a later date, you are responsible to pay the full rate.

#### **REGISTRATION**

Upon acceptance of a position for a child, a nonrefundable registration fee and two full week's payments are due in advance. These are credited toward your first week in attendance and the following week. You will be paying one week ahead of time. If rates change, the difference between your credit and the actual weekly rate will be due.

Infant slots openings become available when other children move up to the toddler room. If a slot is available and you are not ready to have you infant start at that time you may pay the full time rate to hold the slot.

If for any reason, after you have registered and paid the registration fees, you change your mind about attendance, you must provide a written four-week notice of withdrawal or you will forfeit the entire amount paid. The advanced week credit shall be forfeited if a minimum of three week's written notice is not provided..

### **PAYMENT PROCEDURES**

Your specific rates will be outlined in your Contract and Rate Agreement. Payment for the first two weeks, 1/2 month, or month of care is due upon signing (depending on the payment option chosen) and is non-refundable.

### **PAYMENTS**

Make all checks payable to Circle Time Preschool or CTPS.

Regular tuition payments may be made weekly, monthly or by special arrangements. If you pay weekly, your payments are due Friday of the previous week or on the first day of the week. Monthly payments are due the first of the month. There is a wooden box in the preschool room, near the children's bathroom door, where you may deposit your payment. If you make payments in cash, you need to receive a receipt so please see one of the teachers. **DO NOT PUT CASH IN THE PAYMENT BOX!**

### **TUITION**

Tuition is reviewed each year and becomes effective on July 1. Please see attached sheet for tuition rates.

### **FAMILY DISCOUNT**

Families will receive a 10% discount on the older child's tuition when two children of the same family are enrolled full time.

### **INCREASED ATTENDANCE**

Subjected to space availability, you may increase attendance or pick up additional days upon request.

### **SPECIAL NEEDS PROGRAMMING**

Although Circle Time does not employ a specialist to provide services to children with special needs, we may call upon external providers to assist with a child's development. Circle Time initiates a referral process to seek services for a child requiring additional support. Specialists may provide services at Circle Time at the parent's request. Circle Time is not responsible for any financial payments.

### **ORIENTATION AND GETTING STARTED**

Adjusting to a new childcare experience can be stressful for parents and children. Here are some suggestions to help you get started: Schedule a visit with your child before the first day. Talk about the center at home. Even very young children will understand that you like the place and the people, and that you think your

child will also like their new center. The first day at the center should be only an hour or two with each subsequent day gradually increasing in length.

Be prepared to stay with your child to help them settle into their group. When you are ready to leave, say goodbye, then go without hesitation. On the first day, your child will need to bring in items from home along with the enrollment forms and lunch (please refer to Personal Belongings).

#### **LATE FEES**

Tuition not paid within one week of the due date is considered late and will incur a \$5.00 late charge. Please do not let your payments fall behind. If there is a problem, please contact us as soon as possible to make special arrangements.

#### **NSF FEES**

If a check is returned to Circle Time for non-sufficient funds, you will be required to pay a \$30.00 returned check fee. You may be asked to pay cash for that tuition payment plus the check fee. If checks continue to be returned for NSF you will be asked to make cash payments from that point forward.

Following three late or a NSF checks, consultation with the director will be mandatory. At the discretion of the director, the enrollment of the child may be terminated.

#### **AFTER HOURS PICK-UP POLICY**

The center closes at 5:30 and our staff makes their plans based on this. Please call the center immediately if you know you will be late. We suggest you make alternate pick up arrangements if possible. If contact with a parent or alternate pick up person has not been made by 6:00, local law enforcement and/or the Department of Human Services will be called.

#### **LATE PICK UP FEES**

The center cannot afford to pay someone overtime to watch one child. Staff and their families are greatly inconvenienced if you are late picking up your child. Fees are as follows: If your child is picked up after 5:30 you will be charged a fee of \$15.00 plus \$1.00 per minute until 5:45 then the charge is \$5:00 per minute. After 6:00, if a parent has not contacted us, Circle Time has the right to call the police.

The staff member will have you sign a late pick up form when you arrive to pick up your child. If you refuse to sign the form an additional \$10.00 fee will be added to your bill. Payment is expected with your next child care payment. If you have been late picking up your child THREE times, their enrollment may be terminated.

#### **HOLIDAYS AND CLOSINGS**

See attached sheet for holiday dates and closings.

#### **SNOW DAYS/CLOSING**

The decision to close is always a difficult one. Circle Time will close if the city of Portland asks people to stay home and if the city closes its offices. If we decide to close early due to the weather, we will contact you and tell you the time we are closing. When the weather is bad and Portland Public Schools have closed due to weather conditions, we may choose to open at 9:00 a.m. This gives the plows time to plow the parking lot

and give the staff time to shovel and to get to work safely. If Portland Schools closes for any other reason besides snow, that does not mean we will open at 9:00. We will leave a message on the answering machine of any changes or you may listen to WMGX, or watch WCSH or WGME for program closings in extreme conditions. We will try to have the information on the answering machine by 6:00a.m.

### **ABSENCES**

Please notify Circle Time if your child is not going to be at school. We will try to reach a parent by 9:30 if we haven't heard from you and your child is not at our center.

### **ARRIVAL AND DEPARTURES**

Upon arrival, please have your child wash his/her hands.

### **SIGNING IN/OUT**

In each room, a sign in sheet is provided with your child's name on it. All parents are required to sign the child in/out with initials and the time of day. For your convenience, the sign in/out sheets and pen are located on the counter. This gives us a written record of the child's attendance, hours, and the person who brought/picked up your child each day. These sheets are used in the event of an emergency.

Please make sure your drop off and pick up times are brief. The longer you prolong drop off, the harder it gets. It is normal for some children to have difficulty separating from parents, or to cry when being dropped off. Children are often quick to get involved in play or activities as soon as the parent is gone.

Please be brief at pick up times, as well. This is a time of testing, when two different authority figures are present (the parent and the teacher). Many children will test to see if the rules still apply. During arrival and departure, we expect parents to back up our rules, but if you do not, we will remind the child that their behavior is inappropriate and take actions to correct it, if needed. Please be in control of your child during pick up times.

The center wishes to make it clear that its responsibility for your children commences at the time they are signed in and ends when they are signed out.

Parents, while inside the center, are responsible for watching their children and ensuring that their children behave properly and do not wander outside. DO NOT leave children in the hallway or any room unattended.

Similarly, the center assumes no responsibility for any other persons that accompany a parent onto the center premises.

### **ATTENDANCE**

It is the teacher's responsibility to keep accurate count regarding the number of children present, absent, or late. If a child is not at Circle Time by 9:30 a staff member will call the parents and find out if the child is going to attend school or if they are going to stay home. Staff member will follow up and check that parents are signing their children in and out each day.

### **AUTHORIZATION FOR PICKUP**

Our procedure is to release the child only to his/her parents, or someone else the parent designates. All authorized people must be listed on the registration form. If someone other than those listed will be picking

up your child please inform us in writing, or a verbal notice on that day is fine. If there is an emergency you can notify us by phone. We will ask for identification before we allow your child to leave the center.

### **WITHDRAWAL/TERMINATION POLICY**

We require a written notice three weeks before a student withdraws from the program. This gives us adequate time to prepare your child for the changes ahead. Payment is required for the final three weeks regardless of whether or not the child is in attendance. If the tuition is not paid for the three weeks upon notice to C.T. care will not be provided until payment is made. If payment is not made the director will file with the Cumberland County Small Claims Court.

C.T. reserves the right to terminate with notice for the following reasons (but not limited to):

- Failure to pay
- Failure to complete the required forms
- Lack of parental cooperation
- Failure of the child to adjust to the center after reasonable amount of time
- Our inability to meet the child's needs
- Lack of compliance with handbook regulations
- Serious illness of child or provider
- Center closes

C.T. will give a written three week notice of termination for which full tuition is due, whether or not your child is in attendance. C.T. reserves the right to give an immediate termination where there are extreme circumstances that affect the well being of the providers or the children in attendance. In this situation, 1/2 of the tuition is required.

### **TEMPORARY WITHDRAWAL OF CHILD**

Arrangements to withdraw a child from the center are to be made in advance with the director. A predefined length of time in excess of five weeks shall be determined at the Director's discretion. A written notice is required four weeks before a child may withdraw for a temporary leave. In order to guarantee your child's position upon your return, payment for a temporary leave is 50% of your child's normal weekly rate plus a full weeks payment due prior to the child's withdrawal. If insufficient notice is given, the parent is responsible for the full payment.

### **TRIAL PERIOD**

We do not have a trial period. Some children take longer to adapt to a new setting than others. We want to work together with parents to make the transition to our center as easy as possible. If issues arise that cannot be taken care of, either the parent or C.T. may terminate the child care agreement with a written notice (see above). This gives the parent time to find new child care and C.T. the opportunity to fill the space.

### **OPEN DOOR POLICY**

We maintain an open door policy for parents during child care hours. This means that parents are always welcome to call or drop in to see their child. We would appreciate your taking into consideration our schedule when dropping in or calling, and remember that visitors usually cause children to react in an excited manner that does not normally occur when we are alone with the children. If you call during the day, please be aware that we may be busy with the children and may not be able to answer the phone. If you leave a message, we will call you back as soon as possible.

## **COMMUNICATION**

Communication is of the utmost importance to the staff of Circle Time. When we accept a new family into the center, we like to be sure that we can share openly about any concerns or questions that may arise. It is important that there is a similar childcare philosophy between the parents and Circle Time. We always welcome questions, feedback, or discussions of any kind that are oriented towards a positive outcome for the child(ren). Sensitive issues will be discussed in private. Drop off and pick up times are not good times to discuss serious problems. Children listen and understand everything so if you need to talk to my staff or myself, we can set up a time to meet and find a quiet place to talk. Topics that concern day-to-day events, or light-hearted discussion are fine.

## **DAILY COMMUNICATION**

Our goal at Circle Time is to keep communication channels open on a daily basis. Ongoing communication is the critical link between parents and our staff. We provide daily information boards in the preschool room and the two-year old room that explain what we have done during the day. For example: the theme book we read at circle, songs we sang, projects we made at the art table and what we had for snack.

At the end of the day, the infant parents are provided with a daily report of their child's activities and behaviors along with pertinent information such as when he/she has eaten, how much, and when diapers were changed.

If you are on a tight schedule or a staff member is unable to discuss something with you at drop off or pick up time, please call the center and tell us. If you feel a brief meeting would be helpful, please arrange a meeting ahead of time so we can plan for it.

## **PARENT/TEACHER CONFERENCES**

Twice a year we offer formal conferences to discuss your child's development at school. We will also set up additional conferences with you at any time.

## **PARENTAL INVOLVEMENT**

We encourage parents to be a part of our classrooms and we want you to feel free to stop in for lunch, play awhile in the morning, or bring in something special. Parents can be involved in the classroom in many different ways. Here are some examples of ways you can be involved:

Bring in an object from home and share it with the class.

Come and talk about your job, or a trip, etc.

Help your child at home with the concepts we are studying here.

Help to provide treats or other items for our parties.

Help at our potluck dinners.

Help at our celebrations.

Volunteer on field trips.

Bring in an instrument and play a song or sing.

Read a book to a group of children.

Assist us with a special event.

## **FIELD TRIP**

Educational, cultural and recreational field trips are selected to expand and enrich your child's school experience. A parent or guardian must sign a permission slip in order for your child to participate on the

field trip. Parents will be notified of all field trips. Parent volunteers are needed to drive to different locations. Please let us know if you are willing to volunteer.

### **VOLUNTEERS**

Classroom volunteers will be welcome if they are parents or grandparents of currently enrolled children. Community members will also be welcome after they have been through an interview and a background check. All volunteers must comply with the center's health requirements. We may also have students observing and volunteering in the classroom for school project.

### **PARENT PARTICIPATION SNACK PROGRAM**

Circle Time provides healthy morning and afternoon snack if needed. We welcome, but do not require, parent participation in snack preparation. Health food such as fruit and nuts, granola, or fruit bread can be made at home and then brought to school and shared with your child's class. This is a great opportunity for your child to assist a parent in a cooking exercise, and the children are so proud to share their "creation" with their classmates.

**A simple snack with a creative presentation is the biggest hit!**

### **BIRTHDAYS**

We hang a banner on the wall with the child's name on the banner. Parents are encouraged to bring in healthy snacks to share with the children.

### **DONATIONS**

Donations help keep costs down. If you have any of the following items on hand and are willing to donate them, it would be greatly appreciated. This is not mandatory.

Books, dress up clothing, hats, etc. magazines for cutting, especially ones like National Geographic that depict other cultures, or any that have lots of pictures of people, children, or animals. We are looking for pictures that would appeal to children. Paper of any kind--brown, white, colored, waxed, foil, etc. Crayons, watercolor paints, or any miscellaneous art supplies, such as fabric scraps, glitter, pipe cleaners, paper plates, etc.

**IDEAS! We welcome any ideas that you may have for fun activities or crafts!!!**

### **PHOTOGRAPHS**

On occasion staff members and parents at the center take photographs and/or videotapes of the children while at play, birthday parties, events and first and last day of school. These photographs are used for personal reasons only. The center will post pictures for display and at each cubby area. Parental consent will be obtained at the time of registration. I will only post photos of children on the website that have signed the release form.

### **CLEANLINESS/HYGIENE**

We do our best to maintain strict cleanliness and hygiene standards. Children's hands are washed upon arrival, before and after meals and after toileting. We use paper towels for drying hands, so children do not have to use the same towel. Washing hands is the most effective way to fight germs and stay free of illness. Circle Time's staff washes their hands frequently.

Infants sleep in separate cribs or pack-n-plays, with clean sheets used only by them, between washings. Beginning at toddler age, each child has a separate sleeping bag (provided by the parents). All are washed weekly (unless soiled, then they are washed as often as necessary)

Children use separate cups, plates, bowls and eating utensils that have been washed in the dishwasher and dried on the heat setting, or hand washed with a bleach solution. High chair trays, etc. are disinfected with a bleach water solution after each use.

## **ILLNESS**

Circle Time Childcare is a "well-child care facility". At no time do we provide sick childcare. The following illness policies will be strictly enforced, for the health, well-being and safety of all concerned.

**Sick childcare:** If the child shows any signs of illness or is unable to participate in the normal routine and regular day care program then they need to go home. Sick children expose other children, as well as staff, to illness, and require additional care and attention that we are unable to give. Moreover, sick children want care from their parents in the comfort of their own homes. If other children become ill due to exposure to your sick child, either because he/she was returned to day care before full recovery or because he/she was not picked up promptly upon notice of becoming ill, other parents will be unnecessarily inconvenienced. If my staff or I become ill due to exposure to a sick child, all or some of the day care children may need to arrange alternative childcare. In the past, some childcare centers have closed due to illness. Because this is disruptive to other children and their families, your cooperation on this issue is extremely important. There are times when parents have brought their children even though over the weekend or previous night their child had a temperature, had diarrhea, or was throwing up. We understand the need to work and earn a living but please, be considerate and try to see it from our side.

Every effort is taken to reduce the spread of illness by encouraging hand washing and other sanitary practices.

If your child is unable to participate in the normal activities of the child care (including being able to go outside), then your child must stay at home.

If a child becomes ill and needs to be picked up, the parent(s) will be called and are expected to come pick the child up within forty-five (45 minutes). If the parent(s) cannot be reached, or have not arrived within this time, the emergency contact person will be called and asked to come pick the child up.

For the benefit of myself, my staff, and other children in my care, a sick child will not be permitted to return to care for 24 hours after their condition has returned to normal. A doctor's note may be required. Otherwise, the child may return 24 - 48 hours (depending upon the illness) after they have received the first dose of an antibiotic. If a child receives an antibiotic for an ear infection, he/she may return to child care immediately if he/she has been free of other symptoms mentioned for at least 24 hours. If you aren't sure about whether or not to bring your child to care, please call me to discuss it. Allergy related symptoms, and non-communicable illnesses do not require exclusion.

## **SICK CHILD POLICIES AND PROCEDURES**

In general, if a child has a fever, diarrhea, or vomiting, the parents must be contacted. A child must be sent home if he/she has the following:

- An underarm temperature of 101.5 (adding a degree to thermometer reading) or higher
- Diarrhea is defined as three or four watery stools during a period of two hours.
- Vomiting (in infants, more than the usual spitting up)
- Any signs of a possible communicable disease
- Continuous coughing or breathing trouble

The following guidelines have been developed to help keep all of us healthy. We ask that the children stay or go home if they show signs of the following:

**Fever:** Fever is defined as having a temperature of 101.5°F or higher. For children 4 months or younger, the lower rectal temperature of 101°F is considered a fever threshold (though we do not use rectal thermometers). A child needs to be fever free for a minimum of 24 hours before returning to child care; that means the child is fever free without the aid of Tylenol®, or any other fever reducing substance.

**Fever AND** sore throat, rash, vomiting, diarrhea, earache, irritability, or confusion.

**Diarrhea:** Diarrhea is a symptom of viral infection and usually clears up within four days. Symptoms--runny, watery, bloody stools.

**Vomiting:** 1 or more times in a 24-hour period.

**Conjunctivitis:** Symptoms vary slightly for each type but include itching, burning, discharge of tears or mucus, and whites of eyes that turn pink or red.

**Strep throat:** Symptoms are fever as high as 104 degrees, throat pain, headache, and loss of appetite, a general feeling of being ill and sometimes a red rash under the armpits or elsewhere on the body.

**Sore throat,** swollen glands, loss of voice, hacking or continuous coughing or breathing trouble.

**Runny nose** (other than clear), draining eyes or ears.

**Skin rashes:** Frequent scratching of body or scalp, rash, or any other spots that resemble childhood diseases such as impetigo, chicken pox, or ringworm.

**Fussy Child:** Child is irritable, continuously crying, or requires more attention than we can provide without affecting the health, safety or well being of the other children in care.

**Head Lice:** If a child is observed scratching their head we will check their hair for lice. If the staff or parents see nits the child must be removed from school. The child will not be able to return to school until the child's doctor writes a note stating that they are free from head lice.

By observing health standards, we will be protecting your children as well as the other children in the center.

## **COMMUNICABLE DISEASES**

All communicable diseases must be reported to the center. Exposed children and families will be notified of such disease within 24 hours with a note posted on the door. Children may be readmitted to the center either with a physician's release form or after they have been out of the center for a designated period of time as determined by the Health Department.

## **MEDICATION POLICY**

Parents will provide any medications needed by the child, including over-the-counter and prescription medicine. Medication is not to be mixed with formula, juice or food without specific instructions from a physician. Parent or guardian must fill out and sign the medication form and it must be kept in the child's classroom. All medicines must be in their original container with the pharmacist's or manufacturer's label, child's name, dosage instructions, current date, name of medication, and times to be administered clearly written. All medication will be locked up at all times and the medication needs to go home with the parents each night.

## **MEDICATION AUTHORIZATION**

Parent must fill out a medication form before we can administer medication. Written authorization is required for Circle Time staff to administer ANY medication, prescription or over-the-counter. Staff members will keep accurate daily logs of all medication administered to children. Only the director and the staff working directly with your child will administer the medication. Medication forms are available in each classroom and will be placed in your child's folder when medication is finished.

## **MEDICAL EMERGENCIES**

Minor bumps and scratches are inevitable, but we make every effort to keep the children safe through supervision and childproofing. Minor injuries receive appropriate first aid. If an emergency injury or illness occurs, you will be contacted as soon as possible. If necessary, 911 will be called and /or your child will be taken to the hospital of your choice (as indicated on the Emergency Medical Authorization Form) where you will be asked to meet us. If you are not going to be at your usual place of employment, or at home, please make sure that we have a number where you can be reached.

Parents are responsible for all costs involved in emergency medical treatment, including emergency transportation, if required. The owner of Circle Time Childcare will not be held liable for any sickness/injury of either parent/guardian or child while on these premises, or while the child is in the company of the staff of Circle Time during field trips or outings.

## **SUNSCREEN**

Parents are required to put sunscreen on their children before dropping their child off at Circle Time. Parents will provide children with sunscreen lotion. Staff may apply the lotion at the beginning of each outdoor recess. The sunscreen will have a minimum SPF rating of 15. We will not apply any sunscreen or insect repellent before getting permission from the parents or guardian of the child. Older children will be encouraged to apply the lotion to their own hands, arms, and legs while the staff will be responsible for applying it to faces. Please make sure the sunscreen release form is signed.

## **PERSONAL BELONGINGS**

We prefer that children do not bring toys from home unless it is something that can be shared with the entire group (i.e. books, videos, etc.). Some children have a difficult time sharing with others, and it is even harder with their own special toys. If toys are brought, please note that they may be put away if they are the cause of disagreements among the children. An exception to this policy will be that a child may bring a favorite sleep toy for nap time only. We are not responsible for any loss or breakage of personal items. All personal items must be clearly marked with the child's name. Any personal items left at Circle Time for more than two weeks after your child has left our center, will be thrown away.

Each child has a hook in the hall, a cubby for sleep items and a bin for extra clothes in the classroom, and a basket either in the hall (for older children's extra outdoor things) or in the classroom (for infant bibs and burp cloths).

**Infants need:** Diapers, wipes, powders/ointments, pain reliever, pacifiers (if used), bottles and/or cups, formula, baby food (and later, table food), bibs, saline drops/gel and nasal syringe, and two complete changes of clothes (replace when soiled), two crib sheets (pack-n-play size) and a blanket. Please also be sure your infant has seasonally appropriate outdoor wear.

Formula and/or breast milk may be brought in any form—premixed bottles or ready to use formula, or powder or liquid concentrates that we will mix. Breast milk whether frozen or not must be clearly labeled with the child's name and date. All baby food jars must be unopened.

**Toddlers need:** Diapers, pull-ups (if used), wipes, pacifiers (if used), powders/ointments, pain reliever, bibs, small sleeping bag for rest time, swimsuit and towel (summertime), boots, a hat, and two pairs of mittens (wintertime) and two complete changes of clothes (replace when soiled).

**Preschool children need:** Wipes, small sleeping bag, swimsuit and towel, (summertime) boots, a hat, and two pairs of mittens (wintertime) and two changes of clothes.

**All personal belongings should be marked with child's name.** It is not necessary to bring eating utensils, cups or dishes, as they will be supplied. If any of these items are brought, they must be marked with the child's name, to avoid mix-ups with other children.

Children should arrive dressed for play. We like to have fun! Having fun involves outdoor play and lots of messy activities, so make sure that your child is dressed appropriately. Please don't dress your child in nice clothing and expect them to be spotless when you arrive to pick them up. Clothing should be comfortable and seasonally appropriate for outdoors.

### **ACTIVITIES AND DAILY CURRICULUM**

The main goal of Circle Time is to have fun, improve social skills, and encourage creative expression. We will utilize a variety of activities to accomplish this goal. Free play, reading, math, manipulative materials, games, socializing, nutrition activities, cooking, arts and crafts, music/singing, dancing, dramatic play/pretend, and puzzles are just some of the activities we will be doing.

Music helps to develop young brains and will play a strong role in day-to-day activities. We may have special music activities and may also play music during other activities, for example, during arts and crafts or meal times. Some of the music we will be using may include classical, children's songs (by a variety of artists), foreign language tapes and others.

It is the goal of Circle Time to have a variety of toys readily available to the children. Tactile and sensory projects are a part of the basic program. We will utilize a variety of experiences each day. These experiences range from looking for bugs or worms in the play yard, to watching birds or squirrels, to helping make lunch and snacks. They may also include small chores, like watering plants, baking cookies and cakes, clearing the table after lunch, sweeping the floor, etc. Studies have shown that these types of activities nurture a sense of well being and belonging in children.

Our goal for children in our preschool program is to have fun and to reinforce the writing of letters and numbers and the cognitive aspect of understanding what they are and what they represent. The program is to help your child enter Kindergarten having the basic skills required such as writing their name, etc. Young children still learn best from participating in and observing the environment around them and if at any time they do not wish to work on something they will not be forced.

### **INDOOR/OUTDOOR PLAY**

Indoor play: We provide a variety of age-appropriate toys for indoor play. Toys may be rotated or placed temporarily out of use so that the children do not become bored. Younger children have less-developed organizational skills and can get easily frustrated or upset when there are too many toys to choose from. It is also more difficult for them to help with clean up when there are toys everywhere, because it is so overwhelming to them. For this reason, during free play times, each child may select one or two things at a time to play with. They will be shown how to put those things away before selecting something else.

Outdoor play: We will be playing outdoors every day that weather permits. Please make sure that your child is appropriately dressed for outdoor play at all times. Our activities will include walks, playground, water play (sprinkler in summer), bike/toy riding and others.

### **DAILY SCHEDULE**

Young children, toddlers and babies enjoy a structured schedule that allows for flexibility. A schedule helps the day to flow more smoothly, allows the children to anticipate coming events, and aids in achieving a variety of goals. We will adhere to our written schedule to the best of our ability, keeping in mind that anything can happen when children are involved. There will be times when we have to make adjustments to the schedule.

### **INFANT ROOM**

The infant schedule is a general schedule of the day. Each child establishes his/her own feeding, nap, and diaper schedule. Infants nap at varying times and their schedules will be accommodated. Somewhere between 12 and 18 months, children usually drop down to one nap per day. At this time, we will attempt to put them on the scheduled nap/rest period.

7:00-7:30	Meet in Toddler Room (free play)
7:30 –9:00	Arrival/Wash Up/Breakfast
9:00-11:15	Free Exploration/Naps/Outside
11:15-12:15	Clean Up/Wash Up/ Lunch
12:15-3:30	Nap (for older infants)/Free Play
3:30-4:00	Wash Up/Snack
4:00-4:45	Outside
4:45-5:30	Wash Up/Clean Up

### **TODDLER ROOM**

7:00-9:00	Free play (arrival time)
9:00-9:15	Clean up/Diapers
9:15-9:30	Circle Time (Story, Poems, Songs)
9:30-9:45	Wash Up/Snack/Projects
10:00-10:45	Free Play (Sensory Table, Gross Motor, Songs and Dance, Dramatic Play, Blocks, Drawing, Science)
10:45-11:00	Clean up
11:00-11:45	Recess
11:45-12:00	Wash Up/Diapers
12:00-12:30	Lunch /Clean up /Wash Up
12:30-3:15	Nap
3:15-3:45	Clean up/Wash Up/ Snack /Diapers
3:45-4:45	Outside Recess
4:45- 5:30	Quiet Free Play/ Clean Up

### **PRESCHOOL ROOM**

7:00-7:30	Meet in Toddler Room (free play)
7:30-8:45	Free play (arrival time)
8:45-9:00	Clean up
9:00-9:30	Circle Time (Story, Poems, Songs, Discussion of Theme)
9:30-10:30	Choice Time (Science, Writing, Dramatic Play, Math, Games, Sensory Table, Wood Working, Computer, snack)
10:30-10:45	Cleanup (Diapers)
10:45-11:45	Recess
11:45-12:30	Wash Up/ Lunch
12:30-3:00	Nap Time /Quiet Games
3:00-3:30	Clean Up/Wash Up/Diapers/Snack
3:30-4:45	Outside Recess
4:45- 5:30	Quiet Free Play /Clean Up

## **MEALS**

We emphasize eating in a relaxed, quiet, friendly, and safe manner. Children never eat alone. A teacher is always keeping the children company. Parents are to provide healthy lunches for their children. Ice packs in the bags are recommended to keep lunches cold. Microwaves are available for the staff to use to warm your child's lunch as needed. If your child needs to eat breakfast, parents provide the food.

- If Circle Time needs to provide lunch for your child, a minimum charge of \$5.00 will be added to your weekly payment.

## **SNACKS**

We will provide morning and afternoon snack if needed. If your child has allergies, and requires a modified diet, Circle Time must be notified of this in writing. Circle Time must keep on file physicians written instructions describing any foods the child is not permitted to eat. An appropriate substitution will be made, if possible, but if a child has so many allergies that (s)he cannot eat from our menu of snacks, we may require the parents to provide his/her snacks. (See attached sample of snack menu.)

## **SELF HELP SKILLS**

Our goal is independence. We encourage the children to do chores independently. Children are encouraged to help themselves to snack, to pour their own drinks, to hang coats on hooks, put sleeping bags in cubbies, and to put hat and mittens away in their baskets. The preschool children are encouraged to clean up after art and have a drawer for their projects in the classroom.

## **NAPS/QUIET TIME**

There will be a designated nap/rest time each day. All children must nap, rest, read or play quietly. Rest time gives everyone a much-needed break during the day.

We prefer that there are no pick ups or drop offs during the designated daily quiet time, but if it is necessary, please be as quiet and brief as possible. Children who arrive during quiet time will be expected to remain quiet until quiet time is over, so that others will not be disrupted from their naps.

Infants nap at varying times and their schedules will be accommodated. Somewhere between 12 and 18 months, children usually drop down to one nap per day. At this time, we will attempt to put them on the scheduled nap/rest period.

## **TOILET TRAINING**

When you feel your child is ready for toilet training we ask that you begin this teaching at home during a weekend or vacation. We will follow through and encourage your child while they are in our care. Toilet training will be done in a relaxed manner with the cooperation of the family. We require that the child must be at least 2 1/2 yrs. old, and/or must be showing signs of readiness. When a child is ready, the process should go pretty quickly. The child must be kept in pull-ups or 5-ply training pants at all times. Please keep in mind that the activity level here can distract your child from responding to an urge to use the potty, more so than at your home. Therefore, we will continue to use diapers or pull-ups until your child can and will tell us that (s)he must use the bathroom (not just at home, but here, as well) and can control his/her bladder and bowels for a few minutes beyond that announcement.

Parents need to supply training pants with plastic pants, or pull-ups, plus a couple of extra changes of clothing each day (don't forget the socks!).

During toilet training, the child should be dressed in "user friendly" clothing, as much as possible. The best items are shorts or pants with elastic waists, or dresses. **Try to avoid really tight clothing, pants with snaps and zippers, and overalls. These are difficult for children to remove "in a hurry".**

## **DISCIPLINE**

**Praise and positive reinforcement are effective methods of behavior management of children. When children receive positive, non-violent, and understanding interactions from**

**adults and others, they develop good self-concepts, problem solving abilities, and self-discipline. Based on this belief of how children learn and develop values, this center will practice the following discipline and behavior management policy.**

We will...

- Praise, reward, and encourage the children.
- Reason with and set limits for the children.
- Model appropriate behavior for the children.
- Modify the classroom environment to attempt to prevent problems before they occur.
- Listen to the children.
- Provide alternatives for inappropriate behavior to the children.
- Provide the children with natural and logical consequences of their behaviors.
- Treat the children as people and respect their needs, desires, and feelings.
- Ignore minor misbehavior's.
- Explain things to the children on their levels.
- Use short supervised periods of "time out".
- Try to stay consistent in our behavior management program.

We maintain a positive discipline policy, which focuses on prevention, redirection, love, consistency and firmness. We stress two main patterns of behavior: respect for other people and respect for property. The children have the rules of the child care explained to them frequently, so they are all familiar with the guidelines. Please keep in mind that there will be disagreements between children. Young children, especially, who are not adept at communication have a hard time expressing their feelings. Sometimes they hit, throw toys, bite, etc. Although teaching children appropriate behavior is what we will be doing, remember that this behavior is normal, in most cases. We will try to prevent problems, redirect when appropriate, discuss inappropriate behavior, encourage making amends when offense involves another person, and sometimes withdraw privileges based on the principle of "natural consequences". For example, if a child is misusing a toy, then (s)he will not be allowed to play with the toy for a period of time. The use of time outs will be rare, as we have not found them to be particularly effective, except when a brief cooling off period is needed. Sometimes when children are fighting about or throwing toys, we will put the toy in a short time out, and then bring it back into circulation a little later. This seems to work better than giving the child a time out.

If a discipline problem arises that does not respond to the above-mentioned techniques, we will hold a conference with the parents. Together, we will try to find a solution. You may be called to remove your child if his/her behavior prevents us from being able to properly care for the other children. If this is the case your child will be terminated immediately. If the problem continues, other arrangements for the care of the child will have to be made, for the safety and well being of all.

We are required to refer you to the Department of Health for your child's assessment if they continually exhibit violent or unusual behavior that is not safe for your child or the other children in care. It is not a judgment on you as a parent; it is a way to help your child. We will not care for your child if you take offense and choose not to have your child evaluated. Ignoring such behavior will not make it go away, and as they get older and are enrolled in the school system you will not have a choice if it is determined they need to be evaluated.

#### **CLASSROOM/PLAYGROUND RULES**

The entire school is responsible for helping to maintain the order and neatness of the school environment.

1. Everyone is expected to help keep the school litter free by picking up any trash or belongings that you find strewn around.
2. Children are expected to help with the daily cleanup in the classroom and the hallway.

3. Gum chewing is not allowed.
4. Be kind and gentle to one another
5. Everyone has a right to privacy. Everyone has a right to his or her personal belongings. Please do not touch anything that is not yours without the owner's permission.
6. Everyone has the right to feel safe and secure.
7. Everyone has the right to be physically safe.
8. Children are not allowed to fight, push, trip, or use any other aggressive behavior.
9. Use the playground equipment as intended.
10. No tackling or wrestling allowed.
11. Keep sand and sand toys in sandbox. Sand and mulch stay on the ground.
12. Put all balls, ropes, bikes, and other equipment away when finished.
13. Never sit on tables.
14. Sit on swings appropriately (swing straight).
15. Use slides appropriately.
16. Children may not run with sticks.
17. The only thing that is thrown is a ball.
18. Children must walk inside.
19. Please do not let children eat in the hallway.

#### **BITING**

Remember that all children usually go through a biting stage starting around 13 months and it can last until they are almost three. This is a normal part of development. We try to help children communicate through words as they develop and teach them 'nice/soft' touches. Sometimes biting can happen very quickly even when we are right with them. Most every child goes through this stage. That is why we have added a biting form to discuss this particular area of concern for both parents and teachers.

#### **BITING POLICY**

Each biting incident will take into account the age of the child and the suspected reason for the biting. In many cases a child will go through a biting phase, which may last for weeks. Circle Time staff will do their best to stop the biting and be aware of the situation. Staff will comfort the child who was bitten, wash the bite and apply ice. The incident will be documented. When biting behavior persists, a close eye will be kept on the child. Biting causes more upset feelings than any other behavior in childcare programs. Though it is normal for infants and toddlers to mouth people and toys, and for many to try biting, most do not continue after the age of three. Young children bite out of frustration to get what they want, such as a toy from another child. Biting is a natural behavior for very young children. They often do not yet have the social awareness to control this behavior when it is directed against others. A young child is still limited in their ability to express themselves through language. At Circle Time we strive to set up environments that will serve to decrease incidents of biting. However, despite these best efforts, whenever young children are grouped together it is inevitable that biting will occasionally occur. If a child is having a problem with biting the staff will work with the parents to try to resolve the problem together. Biting happens and it is usually unexpected. We can only try to do our best to prevent it by closely monitoring the children and hoping to be able to intervene in time, as the biting usually happens in a flash catching staff by surprise. Parents need to understand that it does not mean a child care center is not doing something right if their child is bitten.

## **BITING PROCEDURE**

### **If a bite occurs the staff will:**

- Provide appropriate treatment (cleaning the area with soap and water, applying antibiotic)
- Fill out an Accident Report detailing what occurred and the treatment given,
- Verbally inform the parents of the child who was bitten and the parents of the biter
- Record the accident in logbook

1. Attend immediately to the injured child. Have the child who did the biting sit to the side where someone can watch him/her.
2. We will provide comfort to the child who did the biting, as it is very upsetting for them as well.

\*\*Please sign and initial below to confirm that you have read and agree to the biting policies and behavior policies at Circle Time Childcare.

## **SMOKING POLICY**

No smoking is permitted on the premises. Please do not dispose of your cigarette butts on our property, including the sidewalk/street or parking lot.

## **PARKING AND TRAFFIC SAFETY**

Drive carefully and slowly in the parking lot following the directional arrows.

Turn your vehicle off when you bring your child into the center and take your keys.

Please lock your doors.

Parking lot is only to be used by parents for drop off and pick up.

Cars left in church parking lot during the day will be towed.

Maine law requires children to wear child restraints while traveling in a car. Please buckle up for safety.

Police will be notified if your child is not in a car seat.

Please do not leave your child/ren unattended in your vehicle while parked. We want to ensure that your child/ren are safe.

## **CONFIDENTIALITY**

All information given to Circle Time to enroll your child will be kept confidential. No personal information will be discussed with any person outside Circle Time Childcare.

## **EMPLOYEE CONDUCT**

Perfect people just do not exist. To assist staff in the professional growth process, the Center uses a progressive series when a staff member needs to change an unsatisfactory or inappropriate behavior. When staff performance needs to change, feedback will be given. Staff will have an opportunity to modify work behavior to come into compliance with center policies, procedures, and culture. Staff members who choose to not accept instructions or come into compliance are at risk of having their work relationship separated. If a serious incident occurs which could endanger a child, or a coworker immediate termination can result. If a child is withdrawn from the center due to a particular employee's behavior, the center has the right to discharge that employee.

**PHONE USE**

Your child has waited to see you all day and we ask that cellphone use be terminated when you walk in the door. We want the children to know that they are more important than a phone call. The telephones at the Center are business use. Personal calls should not be made from the telephones in the Center unless it is an absolute necessity. Please limit the call to no more than five (5) minutes. Long distance calls are only to be made with the Director's approval.

Employee's cell phones should be left in their cars.

**SEXUAL HARASSMENT**

The Center is committed to creating and maintaining a work environment free of objection and disrespectful conduct and/or communication of sexual nature and prohibits sexual harassment by all employees and parents. Conduct, which creates an intimidating, hostile, or offensive work environment, will not be tolerated. The Confidentiality of all parties involved in a sexual harassment charge will be strictly respected in so far as it does not interfere with the Center's obligation to investigate allegations of misconduct and take corrective action.

If you believe you have been the recipient of sexually offensive behavior, you should contact the Director. Employees and parents should report such incidents of harassment as quickly as possible after said occurrence. Any employee, who has been found, after thorough investigation of the facts to having harassed another employee, will be subjected to appropriate sanctions up to and including termination of employee.

**REPORTING CHILD ABUSE AND NEGLECT**

Child care teachers are considered "mandated" reporters of child abuse or neglect. Circle Time staff is to report such acts immediately to the Director (oral report) and prepare documentation (written report).

**REVISIONS TO HANDBOOK AND CONTRACT**

Revision to this handbook and accompanying contract will be made yearly. All families will sign a new contract each year. We reserve the right to make changes in rates and policies, as we deem necessary. You will be notified, in writing, of any changes that may occur. Every attempt will be made to give at least two weeks notice of changes.

PARENT ACKNOWLEDGMENT FORM

(This is a copy, there will be one in the registration packet)

I have received a copy of the Center's parent handbook. I recognize and accept my responsibility to read and become familiar with its contents. I acknowledge it is designed to provide general information related to various policies and procedures. I also understand that the contents of this handbook may change. Further, I understand that the Center reserves the right to add, delete, or modify the contents of the handbook at any time and for any reason.

I also acknowledge that:

1. I accept the contents of the handbook and agree to abide by the information set forth. \_\_\_\_\_
2. I have read and understand the discipline policy and procedures. \_\_\_\_\_
3. I have read and understand the biting policy and procedures. \_\_\_\_\_.
4. I have read and understand the withdrawal policy. \_\_\_\_\_
5. I understand that lunches and extra activities are a parent's financial responsibility. (Pizza, Mrs. Jeffie's, Libs....)
6. I understand the policy on eating in the hallway and other areas of the center. \_\_\_\_\_
7. I understand the outdoor policy. \_\_\_\_\_
8. I have read and understand the three week withdrawal policy and procedure. \_\_\_\_\_
9. I understand the photo policy for the classroom and for the website. \_\_\_\_\_
10. I have read and understand the payment policy concerning absences and weekly tuition. \_\_\_\_\_

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**Parent signature**

**Date**

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