



PARENT HANDBOOK

2024/2025

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Please read this handbook thoroughly, as it covers very important policies and procedures that not only govern our childcare contract agreement, but also pertain to the care of your child. There may seem to be a lot of information, if you have any questions regarding our policies, please do not hesitate to ask.

There will be a yearly revision to this handbook and the accompanying contract. All families will sign a new contract each year. I reserve the right to make changes to the policies and procedures, as I deem necessary. You will be notified, in writing, of any changes that may occur.

THE MIDWEST PLAYHOUSE

Open communication. Explain clearly and carefully your wishes and expectations about how your child will be cared for. Also, provide updates on problems and progress that your child is making. Good communication helps us work together in the best interest of your child.

Agreement on Terms or Arrangements. You should fully understand the terms of the contract and the policies and procedures that you as the parent are agreeing to.

Honesty and Trust. This includes being honest about how you believe the arrangement is working. Although you need to be vigilant in order to safeguard your child, you should trust us to do the best for your child.

Drop off/Pick up on Time. If you know you will be late, please let me know as soon as possible. Late fees will be enforced.

Respect. Mutual respect and kindness are expected from parents and the provider. Immediate termination will occur for disrespect from adult parents.

Philosophy

We believe a child's early experiences enrich and stimulate future growth. Children deserve to be treated and respected as individuals in an environment that welcomes reason, exploration, question, and imagination. We respect each child's need for love, security, acceptance, warmth, and stimulation.

Goals

While in my care your child will have the opportunity to participate in a wide variety of activities, which promote all aspects of development. A home daycare provides children the comfort and experience of belonging to an extended family. I provide a home-like setting; therefore I do not follow a strict routine. My approach to childcare is child-centered and child-directed. Children are offered choices whenever possible.

Enrollment Information and Requirements

We must receive the following information:

- Application Fee, Processing Fee & Non-refundable Deposit (Your spot cannot be secured until we have this, equal to last two weeks of tuition and will be used for the last two weeks, **this is not refundable and if you choose to not use our services prior to start date, your deposit will not be refunded.**
- All documents sent through Brightwheel App for enrollment.

Tuition / Payments

Tuition is due every week of the year. Tuition is due on Fridays for the following week.

Daycare hours where children will have care provided are different per location. Please contact Sarah York for that information.

Tuition is to be paid every week via Brightwheel. A late tuition payment fee of \$25 will be applied each day tuition is not paid. Tuition is never prorated. There will be no tuition adjustments, credits, or refunds due to sickness, holidays, vacations, closings due to inclement weather.

Payment is to be paid via Playground.. I will cover the service fee for check payment but you are responsible for the credit card processing fee that Playground charges. **I do not accept any other payment method.**

Our tuition may increase 2-3% annually based on other business fees that increase. Parents will be given a **30 day** notice if & when this increase will occur.

Returned Checks

In the event that your check is returned to us due to insufficient funds, an additional fee of \$50.00 will be applied. Enrollment will be suspended until full tuition payment and additional fees have been paid in full. After two returned checks, you will no longer be able to pay by check. Other forms of payment accepted are cash.

Daycare Closures & Holidays

We will be closed for holidays, up to 3 weeks vacation and up to 4 personal/sick days per year.

Please refer to the closed document for all holidays where we will be closed. You are still responsible for weekly payment during these days. There are no adjustments to tuition

made in weeks where there is a closing due to a holiday. Tuition will not be waived or prorated for holidays.

Parents are informed in advance in order to adjust their schedules.

Absences

We understand that there are times that your child will be absent due to illness, vacations, holidays, etc. We ask that you please submit any absence via Playground if your child will be absent. Tuition will not be waived or prorated due to absences of ANY kind. If tuition is not paid for any type of absence, enrollment will be suspended, and your child will not be able to attend our program until the balance is paid in full.

Illness Policy

In order to maintain a healthy environment, we ask that you not bring your child to school if they are showing signs of ANY illness. UPON the arrival of your child, we will conduct a quick daily health check. This includes temperature checks upon arrival and diaper checks.

If your child becomes ill during daycare hours, you will be contacted immediately and requested to pick them up.

You will be contacted if your child shows ANY of the following symptoms:

- A temperature greater than 99.9 degrees (digital)
- Discharge from ears
- Discharge from eyes or red eyes
- Stomachache (Child complaining of their stomach hurting and needing to lay down)
- Vomiting or diarrhea that occurs more than once in 24 hours
- Any rash or skin lesion that blisters or looks like it could blister

Signs of cold, tiredness, fussiness, sore throat, runny nose, sneezing, or coughing. Child not acting like their typical self.

Children must be free of the above symptoms for 48 hrs in order to return to daycare.

If your child is experiencing any cold-like symptoms, even if you believe they are allergies, you must have a doctor note to return to care stating that it is just a cold and that they can return to daycare with ANY TEMP that is above 99 degrees. Any contagious virus (i.e. ear infections, strep must have antibiotics and be on it for more than 48 hours after first dose in order to return) Please text Lauren prior to drop off if your child has any of the above symptoms so we may assess the situation.

If I see any of these symptoms after drop off you will be asked to come back and pick up.

Therefore, please have a “back-up plan” on days you are unavailable to come for your child should you be called to do so. When a child is sick, we will call the mother first (or person listed first on the enrollment form); if she cannot be reached, we will then call the father (or person listed

secondly). If we cannot reach either parent, we will call the first person on the emergency list and so on.

Children cannot be admitted into care with signs of a communicable disease. Children must be free from a fever of 101+ for at least 48 hours before returning to school. Children that have a fever of 99.9 to under 101 must be fever free for at least 24 hours prior to returning to care. Please notify us of illness or planned absences, as the teachers often become concerned when a child is absent.

Medication

Medication can be administered to the children while in care at The Midwest Playhouse.

A medication form must be filled out, signed & submitted to us in order for us to administer medication. The form is only good for that day.

Arrivals & Departures

Please ensure your child is dressed and ready to start their day upon arrival. **Please note that we serve breakfast at 8:30. Please feed your child breakfast if they are dropped off later than 8:45. Please refer to your child's classroom schedule for additional snack and mealtimes.**

Authorized Pick-Up

All children will only be released to parents, guardians, or any other person listed as the child's authorized pick-up via Playground. If someone is not listed as an authorized pick-up and is picking up your child, he or she will not be released from our care without direct permission from the parents. Identification will be required upon pick up.

Late Pick-Up Fees

If you anticipate arriving before or after our hours of operation, please contact us immediately. If you anticipate arriving before hours of operation, notice to the provider is required, and a fee will apply.

If a child is left with us after contracted hours, we will attempt to make contact with the parents first. If we are unable to reach the parents, we will proceed to contact the people listed on your child's authorized pick-up list. If we are unable to reach anyone to arrange pickup, we are required, by law, to report to the department of children and family services. **A late fee will be applied for any child that is picked up after contracted hours. There will be a fee of \$10 per minute.**

Outdoor Play

Children that are on a one nap schedule, have a scheduled outdoor playtime of a minimum **once** per day that is weather permitting. If the outside temperature is below 45 degrees or above 90 degrees, it is rainy, or very wet, we will play indoors with an alternative activity. **We will try to get your child outside depending on the time of year and weather.**

Codes of Conduct

The following actions are not permitted: hitting, pushing, biting, kicking, spitting, pinching, throwing toys at others and use of inappropriate language or behavior. We encourage all children to use manners and respect every day. We ask that as a parent, you work with us to continue to stress these standards of conduct to your child. Our rules have been set to ensure safety for all children and staff. These rules will be discussed and taught to all children enrolled and will be expected to be followed. Repeat behavioral problems could result in termination. **Respect for property and other children and staff is expected at all times. Willful destruction of property by any children will be charged to the parents. We will work with parents on behavior issues to be sure progress is being made.**

Discipline Policy

We have found that the most effective form of discipline is to redirect children in a positive manner. If any behavioral issues occur with any child, we will work with that child in a positive manner. The following are our methods used for positive guidance:

- Redirection: When a behavioral issue occurs, we will provide alternatives to the child. For example, we may suggest a different toy, a new activity, or encourage independent play in order to redirect the child.
- Acknowledgment of ALL feelings: Our children may be small, but they have BIG feelings that may be tough for them to explain. We let them get out all their feelings and help them calm down.
- Verbal Intervention: We get down on the child's level and explain to them why his or her behavior is inappropriate and model the appropriate way to handle the situation.

These procedures will be followed if the above methods do not resolve the inappropriate behavior:

1. Observation and documentation of the child's behavior and the steps are previously taken to alter the inappropriate behavior
2. A conversation with the parents and working with them on what forms of discipline work for their family. We will work together in the best interest of the child.
3. Consideration of outside resources.
4. Suspension from the program for a determined period of time
5. Dismissal from the program is the above procedures are ineffective

After all other methods have been ineffective; We may request immediate removal; of any child whose behavior creates a significant risk of harm to the health and safety of other children or staff, following the above-outlined procedures.

What to Bring/Wear

1. **Washable Play Clothing** - we provide many experiences with messy things such as easel paints, finger paints, glue, paste, and dirt. We want your child to feel free to experience these materials without worry.
2. **Appropriate Clothing for the Weather and Ground Conditions** - Ex: If it has rained or there is snow on the ground, bring your child's boots. Remember to send in a pair of shoes if your child wears boots to the center. On cold days be sure your child has a hat and mittens.
3. **Rubber-Soled Play Shoes** – the children have many opportunities for climbing, riding, and running and we want them to be able to do everything safely. Crocks, sandals, flip-flops, smooth bottom shoes, and jellies are not safe on our play equipment and children may get hurt. We recommend sneakers to keep your child safe. (Save the water shoes for Water Play Days.)
4. **Extra Clothing** - Please check your child's box daily and remember to replace any items that have been worn or sent home. Your child's box should always contain a complete change of clothing appropriate for the season. Remember to provide underpants, shirts, socks, shoes, and pants/dress.
5. **Blanket** – A child-size blanket should be brought on the first day of the week. A small child-sized pillow is acceptable if your child desires one; however, we discourage children from bringing large pillows and full blankets due to the lack of storage in our classroom.
6. **A Small Soft Toy** – Your child is welcome to bring a soft stuffed animal to cuddle with during Rest Time.
7. **Diapers, Wipes, Ointment, Formula, bottles, pacifiers**

Label all items your child brings including coats, hats, mittens, boots, backpacks, sheets, blankets, and pillows.

Personal Belongings

Please do not allow your child to bring personal belongings (Ex. Toys) to our program. These items can be disruptive and can easily get lost or damaged. In the event that personal items are brought, we will kindly ask parents to remove the toy from their child prior to them entering the program. We are not responsible for any lost toys.

Meals and Snacks

Breakfast, lunch, and morning + snacks are provided by The Midwest Playhouse. It is optional for your child to eat the meals provided by The Midwest Playhouse. You may choose to pack your child's meals and snacks if your child does not choose to eat the meals provided. Tuition WILL NOT be adjusted if you do provide the food. A schedule of that week's menu will be posted on Brightwheel.

Rest Time

There will be a rest period for all children here at The Midwest Playhouse.

Evaluations

Children enrolled in our program will be evaluated throughout the year to monitor their overall development. Our written evaluations are helpful to both the provider and parents in assessing your child's level of development. These evaluations are merely to act as a communication tool between parents and your provider so that we may work together to enhance your child's strengths and further develop weaker areas. Please be sure to take time to review the evaluations that are sent home to you. **Evaluations will be performed at the 6 month mark and yearly mark. Children will stay in their class until evaluations have taken place.**

Parent Involvement

All parents are welcomed and encouraged to participate in their child's everyday learning experiences. Parents can accomplish this by doing the following:

- Providing treats or other items for parties
- Donating supplies
- Discussing with your child their daily experiences at daycare
- Keeping us informed about important events that are occurring in your child's life outside of our program

By staying involved in our program, you show your child that you value his or her learning experiences and help to ensure a strong working relationship between daycare and home.

Birthdays

We love to celebrate birthdays! Please send pictures of representative times of your child's life that we may borrow to discuss their growth.

We ask that you inform us if you are planning to bring a snack.

Toilet Training

Potty training is an exciting and challenging time for both children and parents. The most ideal setting for potty training is at home with one-on-one attention for about one to two weeks. However, we understand that this is not possible with many of our parents due to their work schedules. We have designed the following policy to help us work with you as your child approaches this important milestone.

- Signs of readiness: Your child will not begin potty training until he/she can:
 1. Recognize that he/she is wet or soiled
 2. Pull pants up and down unassisted
 3. Displays willingness to use the toilet
- Frequency: Your child will be helped and encouraged to use the toilet at reasonable intervals throughout the day. This will allow children to learn bladder and bowel control.
- Clothing: While in training, your child must wear training clothes. Training clothes are clothing that is easily removed and is loose-fitting. For example, sweatpants, elastic waist shorts, skirts, etc. No buttons, snaps, zippers, overalls, or long skirts are recommended. Please provide at least four sets of changing clothes, including socks, one extra pair of shoes, and at least six pull-ups each day during the potty-training process.
- Parent involvement: We will not attempt to work with your child on potty training until a good routine has been established at home first. We require that your child be acquainted with the potty process for at least two weeks, and have successfully used the potty at least three times during this period.

We are more than willing to work with parents on the potty training process with the understanding that this is a joint effort between home and daycare. Your child can not be successful in potty training if you do not put in the required time and effort to continue training at home. If you are not emotionally or physically ready to begin potty training your child, it is best to put it off until you can give it your full attention. Potty training is not an easy process, but with a little patience, love, humor and setting good examples, it can be easily accomplished.

House Cleaning

I do make an effort to keep all areas as clean as possible throughout the day, but there is only one of me, so my house is not always spotless. My main concern is the care of the children.

My cleaning routine is as follows:

- Sanitize the playrooms, kitchen, and bathrooms daily.
- Vacuum and mop floors daily.
- Deep clean/sanitize toys and surfaces daily.

Children help me with keeping the areas tidy. Everyone is encouraged to help clean up toys. This is an essential skill for the children to know before kindergarten, so I try to make it fun with music and games.

Reporting of Suspected Child Abuse/Neglect

It is our intent to build a partnership with parents to help them provide the most suitable environment possible for children. Toward this goal, we have many resources and referrals available to parents upon request. It is important, also, for parents to be aware that state laws require that any and all incidents of suspected child abuse or neglect be reported to the appropriate agency. It is the responsibility of this agency to investigate each reported case.

Emergencies:

Medical: Parents need to keep a current "Emergency Authorization Form" on file. Parents will be contacted immediately in the event of an emergency. If other listed contact people cannot be reached, we will call the physician specified by you on your form. In case of a serious emergency, the closest hospital will be used via an ambulance service.

Fire: There is one fire extinguisher located in my home. If there is a fire that cannot be extinguished quickly, the children will be evacuated immediately before calling 911.

Tornado: In the event of a tornado warning, the children will gather in the bathtub in the bathroom. We will remain there until the inclement weather has passed.

Power outage: There are flashlights located in the kitchen. If the power remains out for some time, there are non-perishables located in the kitchen that will be used to eat. If the weather is inclement and the house is getting too cold for the children, you will be called to pick up your child.

Withdraw/Termination Policy

In the event that you choose to withdraw your child from our program for any reason, please notify us 30 days prior to his or her last day of attendance. If 30 days notice is not provided, the deposit will be used. No documents will be released to you until your balance is cleared with The Midwest Playhouse.

As a provider, I came up with all of these policies to best fit my business. My policies are strict and non-negotiable. If I feel that you are having trouble following or understanding my policies, I will sit down with you and verbally go over the policy you are unclear of or have trouble following. If I feel that you are still contesting and/or violating my policies, your child's enrollment may be at risk for immediate termination depending on the circumstance.