

# **WATCH ME GROW DAYCARE CENTER PARENT HANDBOOK**

## **INTRODUCTION**

Welcome to Watch Me Grow Daycare Center. This handbook outlines the programs and policies of the Center. Additional policies may be included in your registration packet.

## **MISSION**

Our mission is to provide our children with a clean, safe, healthy, loving, and stimulating environment that will promote their emotional, intellectual, social, and physical growth. We are committed to providing the finest curriculum, materials, faculty, and facility to ensure these goals are met.

## **PHILOSOPHY**

Our philosophy is that learning is a developmental process and that children learn through play. By providing children with a wide variety of developmentally appropriate materials, play equipment, activities, and experiences, we are best able to promote the growth of the whole child. Active manipulation and exploration of an enriched environment, specifically designed to meet the interests, learning styles, and developmental needs of our children, provides children with the opportunity to gain knowledge and develop new skills. As they interact with their new environment and the people in it, they make new discoveries. Play influences all areas of development by offering children the opportunities for learning about themselves, others, and their environment.

## **OBJECTIVES**

Our objectives are to provide a program that meets the following goals:

- promotes good health and nutrition
- promotes gross and fine motor skills
- allows each child to grow at his/her own rate by implementing age-appropriate play and learning activities
- respects each child as an individual with unique characteristics
- encourages each child to interact with adults and children in a variety of situations
- helps each child develop effective language skills, both listening and speaking
- helps each child develop self-respect and respect for others
- helps each child develop personal initiative and self-motivation
- supports each child in his/her strive toward independence and self-control
- helps each child develop a positive self-concept and attitude toward learning
- helps each child increase their knowledge and understanding of the world
- encourages each child to think critically and develop problem-solving skills

## **CIRRICULUM**

Our curriculum is a child-centered curriculum that conforms to the guidelines established by the National Association for the Education of Young Children (NAEYC). The children are given the opportunity to self-select many of their activities. The teacher facilitates the child's learning by observing, questioning, modeling, supporting, and challenging them, as well as providing information. The teacher also provides materials and develops and implements activities related to a concept and/or theme.

The classroom environment also supports the curriculum. It consists of several intellectually stimulating learning centers where children can make discoveries through active manipulation of materials and interaction with peers and adults. It is also designed to foster self-reliance and social responsibility. The learning centers that are available are as follows: dramatic play, building block, manipulative play, art, reading, science, motor activity, sensory, and music. The daily curriculum also includes an integrated and balanced mix of the following:

- large muscle/small muscle activities
- indoor/outdoor activities
- quiet/active activities
- individual/group activities
- teacher-initiated/group-initiated/self-initiated activities
- structured/unstructured activities
- process-oriented/product-oriented activities

Pre-School/Kinder-Readiness Program – the curriculum for our 3- and 4-year-old children is developed around the school district's Pre-K screening. Our Kinder-Readiness students are tested at the beginning of the school year to identify strengths and weaknesses.

Curriculum is implemented to prepare children for their upcoming Pre-K screening and retesting is done throughout the year to review with parents and gauge progress.

The child-centered curriculum stresses the process of learning and discovery rather than the product because it allows children to practice new skills and achieve success at any developmental level. This, in turn, promotes self-confidence, self-esteem, competence and independence. It helps cultivate a true sense of wonder and joy in learning.

## **DAILY SCHEDULE**

The daily schedule has been designed to provide a framework for the day's activities. Routines reassure children by providing a consistent and predictable pattern to each day. The schedule not only provides for orderly planning but allows flexibility so that time devoted to a specific activity/routine can be adjusted to meet the needs and interests of the children. Themes and concepts are introduced to the children through various materials and activities.

The following is an example of a typical day for toddlers and preschoolers:

- 6:30 – 8:15     **Arrival** – upon arrival, children are greeted by a staff member and engage in free play.
- 8:15 – 8:30     **Transition** – clean up, toileting, diapering and hand washing to prepare for morning snack.
- 8:30 – 9:00     **Morning Snack** – a nutritious morning snack is served to the children.
- 9:00 – 9:15     **Transition** – toileting, diapering and hand washing to prepare for morning activities.
- 9:15 – 11:45    **Circle Time** – children participate in teacher-directed group activities (stories, fingerplays, songs, weather, calendar, theme discussions, etc.)
- Morning Activity** – children participate in semi-constructed activities related to a theme or concept (art, language, science, math, cooking, music/movement, etc.)
- Free Play** – children self-select activities in the learning centers, gym, or outdoors. A variety of developmentally appropriate materials are available for the children to choose.
- Enrichment Programs** – Developmentally appropriate math, science and language programs are available for the children.
- 11:45 – 12:00   **Transition** – clean up, toileting, diapering, and hand washing to prepare for lunch.
- 12:00 – 12:30   **Lunch** – a nutritious lunch is served to the children.
- 12:30 – 12:45   **Transition** – clean up, toileting, diapering, and hand washing to prepare for nap time.
- 12:45 – 1:00     **Story Time** – children listen to a story or look at books to prepare for nap time. Teachers will also play soft music and rub backs to help the children relax.
- 1:00 – 3:00     **Nap/Quiet Time** – children will nap or rest quietly. Children who cannot sleep or who have outgrown naps may engage in quiet activities.
- 3:00 – 3:15     **Transition** – toileting, diapering, and hand washing to prepare for afternoon snack.
- 3:15 – 3:45     **Afternoon Snack** – a nutritious afternoon snack is served to the children.
- 3:45 – 4:00     **Transition** – toileting, diapering, and hand washing to prepare for afternoon activities.
- 4:00 – 6:00     **Afternoon Activity** – children participate in semi-structured activities related to a theme and/or concept.
- Free Play** – children self-select activities in learning centers, gym, or outdoors.
- Departure** – children are picked up based on parents’ schedule.

\*\*\* Toileting and diaper changing will be done as needed throughout the day and on individual schedules for children who are involved in toilet training.

The daily schedule for infants is different from that of toddlers and preschoolers. Young infants have individual schedules for eating and sleeping and routines are established based on their needs. A chart will be posted in the classroom describing the child’s current daily schedule. Diapering will be done throughout the day as needed. Whenever infants are not involved in a planned activity with their

caregiver, they will be involved in free play. They will also spend time outdoors and go on daily stroller rides when weather permits. Routine care activities also provide a special time for interaction between infant and caregiver.

### **OPEN DOOR POLICY**

Watch Me Grow Daycare maintains an open-door policy whereby parents are free to observe their children at any time. We welcome and encourage you to visit. All classrooms and the gymnasium are equipped with observation windows, which afford you the ability to view your child in a non-disruptive manner. If you have any questions or concerns after observing your child, please feel free to discuss them with your child's teacher or the Director.

### **ENROLLMENT**

Enrollment at Watch Me Grow Daycare Center is open to children ages 6 weeks to 12 years old. We offer part-time and full-time care for infants, toddlers, and preschoolers, as well as before/after school and summer camp programs for school-age children. The center must be furnished with a completed registration packet, along with a non-refundable registration fee and one week tuition security deposit (applied to your child's last week of care), for each child enrolling in the program. If after registration, your circumstances change and you do not attend the Center, both the registration fee and tuition deposit are non-refundable. Once your child attends the Center, a two week notice of withdrawal or reduction in days attending is required regardless of circumstances. Enrollment will be assigned on a first-come, first-served basis. Additional children may be added from the waiting list if openings become available. Children will be assigned to specific rooms based on their age and development level. Children may occasionally visit other rooms to comply with New York State ratios or to familiarize them with their new rooms come move-up days. Children will also move up to new rooms during the school year based upon their age and/or center enrollment changes.

### **HOURS AND HOLIDAYS**

Hours of operation are 6:30 am to 6:00 pm, Monday through Friday. The Center will be closed on the following holidays:

- New Year's Day
- Memorial Day
- July 4<sup>th</sup> Holiday
- Labor Day
- Thanksgiving Day
- Christmas Day

The Center will close early at 4:00 pm on the day after Thanksgiving, New Year's Eve and Christmas Eve. Other early closures may be added and families will be notified on Brightwheel.

In the event of a snow or other emergency condition that may prohibit the Center from opening, please listen to WGRZ-TV 2, News Radio 930 WBEN or go to WGRZ.com for information regarding our Center. If the Center is faced with an early closing, each parent will be notified by telephone and the Brightwheel app. It is the responsibility of the parent to arrange for pick-up of their child.

## **MANDATORY NOTIFICATION**

Please notify the Center when:

- Your child is going to be absent from the Center.
- There is going to be a change in your child's schedule.
- Someone other than a parent or guardian is picking up your child.
- Your child has been exposed to a communicable disease.
- There is a change in information supplied in the registration packet.

## **TUITION**

Tuition is determined by the number of days per week your child is scheduled to attend and the current fee schedule. Fee schedules are subject to change with a minimum of two weeks' notice. Half days are divided into morning (7 am – 12:30 pm) and afternoon (12:30 pm – 5:30 pm) segments. Tuition is due in full, weekly, biweekly, or monthly, on or before the first day of the period for which your child will be attending. Tuition is due regardless of your child's attendance and/or holidays and emergency closings, including, but not limited to, pandemic illnesses. If your child must quarantine for any reason, tuition is still due in full. Parents receiving county or other tuition assistance are responsible for the difference in the county reimbursement rate and the Center's tuition rate (if a difference in rate exists). A late fee of \$20 per week will be assessed on any outstanding balances not paid by Friday morning drop off.

Due to the small numbers of children in attendance in the early morning and evening, and the OCFS requirement to have children separated by age group regardless of numbers, there will be a daily limit of 10 hours of care. If you require care for more than 10 hours a day, there will be a fee of \$2.00 per hour. You will be charged this fee regardless of whether your child attends or not. If you are late picking up your child after 6:00 pm, you will also be assessed a fee of \$10 for each 5-minute interval after 6:00 pm. These charges are due to the necessity of keeping multiple staff members to care for the children.

You may pay tuition by cash or check in person or by credit card or electronic bank withdrawal on Brightwheel. There is a 3% fee for any credit card payments, and a \$0.90 fee for electronic bank withdrawal per transaction, subject to change per the credit card company and bank fee schedules. Please indicate your child's name on your checks. Checks returned by the bank for non-sufficient funds will be charged to you at a fee equal to the amount charged the Center, which currently is \$20 per check, subject to change per the bank fee schedule. Receipts will be given upon request.

## **ILLNESS, VACATION, HOLIDAY & CENTER CLOSINGS**

There is no reduction in tuition for days your child does not attend. The expenses incurred by the Center are on-going whether a child is present or absent. This includes any short-term government shutdown of businesses of less than 30 days. In the case of a pandemic, or other catastrophic event in which OCFS, Erie County, New York State, or the Federal Government shuts businesses down for a period of greater than 30 days, a child's spot may be held with payment of half the tuition cost for the child. If there are families requiring care during the pandemic, or other catastrophic event, because their jobs are deemed essential, those families will be given preferential treatment for the space in the classroom. If the reduced tuition is not paid during the shutdown period, your child's spot may not be held.

## **CORPORATE DISCOUNTS**

- We have an agreement with some large businesses.
- If you feel your company would benefit from this discount, have your HR person contact the Center for information. 716-656-8050
- **M&T Corporate Employees**
  - We will waive the first year's registration fee at sign up.
  - We will deduct \$100.00 off one week of care after four weeks of care have been provided.
- **Active Military Personnel**
  - Same as above
  - Waive registration fee each year

## **ARRIVAL/DEPARTURE**

Upon arrival, you must bring your child into the Center and remain until your child is greeted by a staff member. For the safety of the children, please make sure your child walks in the hallways and stays with you based upon your arrival/pick-up time, some classes may be combined to adequately staff classrooms and provide children with other children to interact with. Your child's personal items should be stored in their cubby. During drop off, some children may experience separation anxiety. This is normal and usually passes in a few days. In cases like these, it is best to tell your child that you'll be back, say good-bye, give a hug and promptly leave. Linger at the Center will only make it more difficult for you and your child. It will also send mixed messages to your child regarding the drop off routine. You are welcome to phone the Center or view your child through the observation windows as often as necessary to help you feel reassured. When picking your child up at the end of the day, you must come into the Center. No child will be allowed to leave the building unattended. If someone other than a parent will be picking up your child, they must be listed on the release form and will be required to show identification. If someone other than a previously authorized person will be picking up your child, they must be listed on the release form and will be required to show identification. If someone other than a previously authorized person will be picking up your child, you must provide the Director with notification (authorizations over the phone will be subject to verification). They also will be required to show identification.

In the case of separation/divorce agreements, the parent maintaining custody will be required to submit in writing when the other parent may pick up the child. This policy will be strictly enforced for the safety of your child.

School-age children arriving or departing by bus will be supervised by a staff member. The Center is responsible for school-age children once they enter the Center.

## **WHAT TO BRING TO THE CENTER**

Your child will need a complete change of seasonally appropriate clothes, including socks and undergarments, to be used in case of an accident. Please replace any soiled clothing that is sent home with a fresh set the next day.

Dress children appropriately for outdoor play. The children will go outdoors as often as practical. In winter, include hat, mittens, boots, snow pants, and coat. The Center cannot leave staff behind to care for children that are not prepared or whose parents do not wish them to go outside.

Please provide an art smock for your child.

Dress children in practical, comfortable clothing to provide ease and safety in movement as well as to encourage self-help.

Bring a pair of sneakers or sturdy shoes for indoor wear. Snow boots may not be worn in the Center.

A blanket, pacifier and/or rest buddy may be brought in for nap time.

All children should have a comb or hairbrush at the Center.

Parents of infants and toddlers must provide diapers, pull-ups, wipes, formula, baby food, bottles, and pacifiers as needed. Your child's teacher will notify you when these items need to be replenished.

All items brought from home must be labeled with your child's name. Children's personal toys should not be brought to the Center unless permission is granted by the teacher. The Center is not responsible for any personal items lost or missing. Guns, war toys, or toys of destruction will not be permitted. Candy and gum also should not be brought to the Center.

## **NUTRITION**

We will provide nutritional, well-balanced meals and snacks. These include a morning snack, lunch, and afternoon snack. We have a fully equipped kitchen, and all food items will be prepared on site. Weekly menus will be posted and are approved by a NYS licensed nutritionist. Teachers will model acceptable table manners and good eating habits. Children will be encouraged to serve and feed themselves and to help clean up after eating. This will provide them with an opportunity to exercise their independence.

Parents of infants must provide formula and appropriate baby foods for their child. Once a child is able, he/she will eat the regular lunch menu.

Any food allergies must be documented in the registration packet. These allergies will be posted in the kitchen and in the child's classroom.

## **MEDICAL FORMS**

All children are required to have a physical exam annually and a medical report must be completed by their physician prior to enrollment. It is the responsibility of the parent to keep their child's immunizations up to date.

## **ILLNESS**

To provide a healthy environment for all children, sick children will not be permitted to attend. If your child becomes ill while at the Center, you will be notified immediately. The following are designated symptoms of illness:

- Vomiting
- Fever of 101 or greater
- Loose bowel movements
- Severe coughing, sneezing, runny nose, and/or sore throat
- Inflamed, teary, and red eyes or discharge from the eyes
- Unidentifiable skin rash or irritation
- Unusual fatigue or irritability

Parents are required to pick up children within a reasonable amount of time if the Center deems the child too ill to attend the Center. Whenever your child has been exposed to a communicable disease (chicken pox, conjunctivitis, head lice, strep throat, pin worm, etc.), please respect the welfare of all the children at the Center and report it to the Director as soon as possible so that other parents can be alerted.

## **MEDICATION**

At times, your child may need to receive medication while attending the Center. All medications, whether prescription or over the counter, must be given to the Director. The following requirements must be met for the Center to administer any medications:

1. The Center must receive written permission of the parent and the child's pediatrician. This written permission must include:
  - Statement giving permission for the Center to administer the medication
  - Child's full name
  - Medication name
  - Dates medication is to be administered
  - Recommended dosage
  - Time interval for administration
  - Expiration date of medication
  - Prescriber's name and license number for prescription medication
  - Complete instructions for administration of the medication
  - Other information required by the Written Medication Consent Form
2. Medicine must be brought to the Center in its original container, which must include:
  - Child's full name
  - Medication name
  - Expiration date
  - Dosage
  - Frequency
  - Direction for administering the medication
  - Prescriber's name and license number, if applicable



If you want the Center to apply a non-prescriptive topical ointment (Desitin, suntan lotion, etc.) on your child, you must sign a release form giving us permission to do so and provide us with specific instructions.

### **MINOR INJURIES**

In the event of a minor injury, first aid will be administered to your child at the Center. You will be informed of the mishap and the treatment when you pick up your child. All incidents, no matter how minor, will be documented.

### **MEDICAL EMERGENCIES**

In the event that your child will need medical attention, every attempt will be made to contact you first. Therefore, it is imperative that you notify us of any changes in your schedule or phone numbers. In the event of a serious injury or medical emergency, an ambulance will be called, and you will be notified immediately.

### **ALLERGIES**

If your child has allergies, please inform your child's teacher and the Director. These allergies will be posted in your child's classroom and in the kitchen, if applicable. They will also be on file at the Center. It is important for you to familiarize us with any specific symptoms of allergic reactions so we may be alerted to administer any necessary treatment. Treatment should be detailed by your physician in writing.

### **BEHAVIORAL MANAGEMENT**

We seek to build a child's self-esteem by helping him/her develop self-control and responsibility for his/her actions. Under no circumstances will methods of discipline that frighten, demean, or humiliate a child be used. Also, under no circumstances will corporal punishment be used. Expected behavior is based on the child's developmental level and is firmly, consistently, and respectfully communicated to the children. The children are encouraged to use language to resolve conflicts whenever possible or are redirected to alternative activities as necessary. These tactics often remedy the situation.

However, if a child's inappropriate behavior becomes aggressive or destructive, the child will be removed from the situation. If the behavior persists, the child will be placed at a table for "time out" until he/she is able to regain appropriate control. The child will be allowed to do a quiet activity while sitting at the table. A teacher will talk with the child before he/she is allowed to rejoin the group. The Center reserves the right to discontinue enrollment for a child whose behavior continues to disrupt the daily operations of the classroom.

## **PARENT/STAFF COMMUNICATION**

The following forms of communication will be used to keep you informed of your child's progress and activities:

- Direct Communication – frequent conversations with your child's teacher is vital to providing your child with the best possible care.
- Parent/Teacher Conferences – a conference may be scheduled at any time based on the expressed needs and interests of the parent.
- Daily Reports – specific information about your child's day at the Center, including their activities and routines (foods eaten, length of nap, toilet training and diaper changes, etc.) will be given to you each day your child attends the Center.
- Bulletin Board – general information and announcements will be posted outside your child's classroom and in the foyer area.
- Special Events/Parties – the Center schedules special events throughout the year and will be posted in the foyer and on the website.

\*\*\*Parents are encouraged to approach the teacher and Director with any questions or concerns they may have about their child.

## **EMERGENCY EVACUATIONS**

In the event of a Center emergency evacuation, where it is deemed unsafe for the children to re-enter the daycare building, the children will be transported to a relocation site until parents can pick them up. The relocation site will be posted on the door at the Center and all emergency parent contact numbers will be called. Also, the relocation site will be communicated via TV/Radio announcements. Our primary relocation site is Bellevue Fire Hall, 511 Como Park Blvd., Cheektowaga, 716-656-1680. Our secondary relocation site is McDonald's, 2567 Union Rd., Cheektowaga, 716-656-7486.

## **SHELTER-IN-PLACE**

The Center will conduct two "shelter-in-place" drills each year. Parents will be made aware of these drills in advance. The date and time of the drills will be posted on the front door of the Center one week prior to the drill.

## **REGULATIONS**

The NYS OCFS regulations can be accessed at the front desk. Contact information for the OCFS is posted on our license.

## **DISCIPLINE**

The Center has policies and procedures to administer discipline in such a way as to help each child develop self-control appropriate to the age and development of the child. Where a child's behavior harms or is likely to result in harm to the child, or others, or seriously disrupts or is likely to seriously disrupt group interaction, the child may be separated briefly from the group. The child will be placed in an area in view of and under the supervision of a staff member, but only for as long as necessary for the child to regain enough self-control to rejoin the group. Separation of the child from the group in any other manner is prohibited.

## **SAFETY OF CHILDREN FROM ABUSE/MALTREATMENT**

The Center has policies and procedures to protect children from abuse or maltreatment by any other person. The Center will clear any person who will have contact with the children with the New York State Central Register. Also, the Center and its staff members are mandated to report any suspected incidents of child abuse and maltreatment concerning a child receiving our care to the New York State Central Register of Child Abuse and Maltreatment. Staff members must also report cases in which they have reasonable cause to suspect that a child coming before them, in their capacity as a daycare worker, is an abused or maltreated child.

## **CHILD ABUSE AND MALTREATMENT**

If you believe that your child has been abused by a parent, guardian or relative, or by a staff member of a daycare or other childcare facility or school, call the NYS Central Register for Child Abuse and Maltreatment at: 1-800-342-3720. Calls are received at this number 24 hours a day, 7 days a week. If you believe your child has been abused by someone you know who is not a relative, or by a stranger, call your local police or sheriff's department.

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