

**A Child's Place**



**Family Guidebook**

Updated 3/2025

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Dear Family,

Welcome to A Child's Place (ACP)! We know that choosing a childcare program is one of the most important decisions you will make, and we are delighted you have chosen ACP to fulfill your childcare needs. At ACP, your child will be cared for in a safe, inviting environment that nurtures the mind, body and spirit.

A Child's Place strives to create partnerships with the families and communities we serve. We believe a strong connection between family and school assist in the healthy development and learning of each child. We welcome feedback and participation in our programs. Individual locations will offer many opportunities over the school year to attend events and volunteer.

Enrolling your child in ACP, especially if this is your child's first time in childcare, can be a big change. New routines, meeting new teachers and making new friends, will require an adjustment period that can vary from child to child. Our teachers and administrators are very experienced in welcoming new students to our programs and will work with families to ensure a smooth transition.

This guidebook was created to assist families as they begin their journey with A Child's Place. Please take the time to read it thoroughly upon enrollment, then keep it as a reference for the future. Over time, new information may be added or changed. These updates will be sent via email to our currently enrolled families. The online version of our guidebook will always be the most current version.

Thank you for the opportunity to know and work with your family. We wish you much happiness and success as you begin your child's educational journey!

Sincerely,

*Tracie Costello*

President/CEO



## FAMILY INVOLVEMENT

### **Family-Teacher Partnership**

The best learning environments for children are those with close ties between school and home. You are your child's primary and most important teacher. We encourage parents' desire to participate in our school community and provide numerous opportunities throughout the school year to do just that. Additionally, parents are encouraged to speak to their child's teacher daily regarding their classroom experience.

Together, we can help children build nurturing relationships with others, create a positive attitude toward themselves and develop a lifelong love of learning.

### **Stakeholders/Community Resources**

Stakeholders are those groups or individuals who are significantly impacted by the children/families who are served and who have the potential to impact our facility. A list of Stakeholders will be available to view at the parent's request.

There may be times that your family needs additional resources that may be available in our community. Each location has a list that will help in identifying and locating these organizations. Please see your director for this list or visit the tab on our website under family resources (<https://www.acpkids.com/parents/resources/>).

### **Conflict Resolution**

Differences of opinion, and sometimes even conflict, are an inevitable part of living and working with others. To address these issues, it is imperative to ensure an environment of mutual respect, tolerance and honest communication long before conflict arises. Maintaining a healthy environment is not determined by the absence of conflict but by its quick resolution.

Concerns and grievances are most effectively addressed with the Director. We encourage you to discuss specific classroom concerns with the appropriate teacher and general concerns with the Director who will involve staff members as needed.

If you feel your concern is not addressed fully, you may reach out to your school's Executive Director. Their contact information is available on your school information sheet. If concerns are still not satisfactorily resolved at this level, you may contact the COO whose contact information can be found on the website.

### **Code of Conduct**

A Child's Place strives to create a safe, encouraging environment in which a child can learn, grow, and develop. To achieve this ideal environment, parents, staff and all visitors will be required to abide by our Code of Conduct while on school property. Violation of the Code of Conduct could result in temporary or permanent removal from the school/program.

The following are strictly prohibited on school premises:

- Swearing or cursing

- Threatening any person including staff, parents, or children, whether in person or via phone/email/social media
- Physical punishment of your child or another child. This includes overly harsh verbal reprimands or verbally disciplining a child that is not yours
- Smoking or vaping
- Confrontational interactions with staff, parents, or administrators of A Child's Place

### **Family Communication**

A Child's Place is committed to creating a strong connection between caregivers and parents. With that goal in mind, we strive to provide ongoing communication about your child's experience at our school and their individual development using Procure Connect. You will receive an email prior to your child's start date with instructions to create an account.

We support language development for all children regardless of primary home language or cultural background. We make every accommodation to foster communication between children, between children and teachers, and between teachers and families. These accommodations may include pictures, gestures, sign language, and translation of family communication. Children and parents/guardians who have a limited English language ability can be assisted with the translation of written information or with an interpreter or use of translation platforms. Contact the Program Director to make necessary arrangements.

We use various forms of communication that may include:

- **Daily activities:** Procure Connect will be utilized for children in our early learning centers to communicate daily experience in the classroom.
- **Notice boards:** Bulletin boards can be found in classrooms as well as public areas around our schools, communicating special events, daily events, holidays, celebrations, etc.
- **Email/Procure Connect:** Directors will utilize email/messages on a regular basis to communicate school activities, reminders and special events.
- **Text notifications:** Directors may send text messages to families if a more urgent message needs to be conveyed.
- **Website/social media:** General school information, emergency announcements and school events may be posted on social media or our website from time to time. Your child's photograph would not be posted on any public forum without your permission being obtained prior to posting.

## **PROGRAM STANDARDS**

### **State Licensing**

A Child's Place facilities/locations are licensed by the Pennsylvania Department of Human Services located at 801 Market Street, Philadelphia, PA. State regulations can be found online at <https://www.pacode.com/secure/data/055/chapter3270/chap3270toc.html>. Additionally, a hard copy of the state regulations is available for your viewing at each of our locations.

### **Transitions**

At A Child's Place, we recognize the importance of new beginnings for both the child and the family. Transitions can feel stressful at times, which is why we want to make them as smooth as possible. Transitions are supported by slowly integrating the child into a new program by providing customized care and communication throughout the transition period.

The initial transition from home to school can be the most challenging for families as new people and routines are introduced to your child. Parents are encouraged to meet with your child's teacher and visit the classroom before they start school. Preferred communication methods, as well as any anticipated adjustment issues, should be discussed at this time. It would be a good idea to bring your child to visit the school and classroom several times before his/her first day which will contribute to a smooth start of school.

There is no set formula for classroom transitions. Children transition to the next age group based on chronological age, developmental readiness, state licensing requirements and space availability. Each classroom changes to fit the developmental characteristics of the children enrolled. You will have the opportunity to meet your child's future teachers during the transition period. Your child will be gently integrated into the new environment by visiting the new classrooms through a series of visits. Parents are encouraged to visit the new classroom as well during this time to establish a dialogue with the new teacher.

### **Positive Guidance**

A Child's Place believes that keeping children busy and actively engaged decreases the frequency of behavioral issues in the classroom. Transition activities help the children move smoothly from one activity to another. Our caregivers use positive guidance and redirection. Setting age appropriate, clear limits fosters the child's ability to become self-disciplined, which is our ultimate goal.

At A Child's Place, development is viewed as a process of growing, with each age and stage having its own characteristics, challenges, and needs. Through positive guidance and modeling, staff help children feel good about themselves and behave in responsible ways. Children are given alternatives that enable them to turn destructive situations into constructive ones. Natural and logical consequences motivate and empower children to make responsible decisions. Cooperation, helping, negotiation and problem solving are encouraged.

The following methods of discipline are **prohibited**:

- Corporal punishment, including spanking.
- Shaking, squeezing, or physically indicating disapproval
- Shaming, humiliation, or verbal abuse
- Labeling, such as indicating a child is a "bad" boy or girl, or otherwise implying that he/she, rather than the behavior, is the problem.
- Withholding of food or drink, outdoor time, or unrelated activities (i.e., social events) as punishments
- Retaliating or doing to the child what he or she did to someone else.
- Punishment for soiling, wetting, or not using the toilet.

### **Teaching Staff**

A Child's Place staff members undergo a thorough screening and hiring process. This process includes a state-required background check consisting of Criminal, Child Abuse, FBI and National Sex Offender

Registry Clearances. Staff must have a physical and TB test within 12 months of start date and complete mandated reporter and health and safety training upon hire.

Our staff are required to be trained in pediatric first aid and CPR and fire safety within their first 30 days of employment. Emergency preparedness training occurs at hire and subsequently each year thereafter.

A Child's Place encourages and supports professional development for our staff. We offer ongoing education by way of "in-service" days so that staff can maintain state-required training hours and complete additional trainings required by Keystone Stars, our accrediting organization.

### **Curriculum and Conferences**

Lesson plans are developed by our teachers utilizing *Learning Beyond Paper Curriculum* and adhering to Pennsylvania's Early Childhood Standards for Learning. Teachers will document your child's progress using observations and assessments. Conferences will be offered twice per school year so parents can review their child's progress.

Your child's teacher will also complete an initial observation 45 days after enrollment. Ages and Stages Assessments, a screening tool utilized to evaluate a child's development including social and emotional growth, shall be completed for all children from 6 weeks through pre-kindergarten at developmentally appropriate times.

In accordance with our state licensing requirement, Child Service Reports, another assessment tool that monitors a child's development, will be completed twice annually. Parents will be given the CSR before or during conferences so they can review their child's progress and set new educational and developmental goals with the assistance of your child's teacher.

### **Early Intervention Services/Individual Educational Plans (IEPs)**

While all children grow and develop in unique ways, some children experience delays in their development. Children in the state of Pennsylvania with developmental delays benefit from a state supported collaboration among parents, service practitioners and other medical personnel or therapists. Our schools are open to discussing any services your child may need. If your child shows delays our director will discuss with you the steps to have your child evaluated or how to obtain services in your area.

If your child comes to our program with an IEP (Individualized Educational Plan) in place, it is important to discuss this plan with your child's teacher so that we can maximize your child's learning experience while in our care. Our teachers can participate in ongoing meetings and evaluations as well to enhance the long-term success of the IEP. Children

### **Behavior Incidents and Family Confidentiality**

In social settings where young children are learning to explore and experiment with peer interaction, it is not unusual for incidents of aggression to occur. At different stages of development, children may

express their feelings and needs in non-constructive ways. Sometimes, this results in a child hitting another child, grabbing toys, or even biting. A Child's Place is committed to the education and development of young children and understands the development context in which these behaviors may occur. It is our goal to provide an environment in which children can develop and grow and learn more constructive ways of interacting with their peers.

When incidents of aggression occur, Incident Reports will be completed for each child. Each child's identity will remain confidential, and staff will communicate with each family involved. The information shared will include details of the incident (time and place), preceding and subsequent events, specific steps taken to comfort the child who was hurt, and how the situation was handled in general. Plans may be developed to teach more appropriate ways to interact and to prevent future occurrences; and are shared with parents.

## HEALTH & SAFETY

### **Medical Records**

Current medical information is required for each child prior to commencement of care. This information ensures the well-being of the children in our care and complies with state regulations.

We must receive a health assessment and updated immunization report (including a flu shot) signed by a physician prior to the start of school. If your child does not receive a flu shot, parental written documentation will be required. The physical must be completed within a year of enrollment for our Early Learning Center. Additionally, an updated health appraisal and immunization record is required to be completed at each well-visit to document adherence to state mandated requirements.

For the school age programs, a health assessment and updated immunization report including an annual flu shot signed by a physician prior to the start of school is required at registration (kindergarten enrollments must provide the child's 5-year-old physical) and then again when the child turns 12. If your child does not receive a flu shot, parental written documentation will be required annually.

If your child has physical or mental disabilities or delays, we ask that you schedule a meeting with your school's director prior to enrollment. A Child's Place, in accordance with the Department of Human Services best practices, include all children with medical, physical, social, emotional, and educational needs to the best of our abilities. A Child's Place abides by the Americans with Disabilities Act and will make reasonable accommodations as our programs permit.

### **Child Wellness**

If your child appears to be ill upon arrival or becomes ill during the day, you will be asked to pick him/her up within a reasonable amount of time (within an hour). If we feel your child is well enough to

attend school but may be becoming ill, we will monitor your child and keep you updated throughout the day.

### **Allergy Prevention**

Families are expected to disclose all known allergies, both food and environmental. It is imperative an individualized care action plan be provided for children with diagnosed allergies or asthma. Prescribed medications should also accompany the care action plan (see medication policy). Parents should meet with your child's teacher and Director to review the care action plan before the commencement of school.

Not all classrooms are free from allergens. This decision is made on a case-by-case basis dependent on the children in the classrooms and the severity of the allergy.

Despite our most diligent efforts, it is impossible to eliminate all risks for children with food allergies. Ultimately, in light of the risks that cannot be eliminated, parent/guardians will need to decide whether group care is appropriate for their child with allergies.

### **Diapering**

Children's diapers are checked at least every two hours, as well as upon awakening, and will be changed promptly when soiled or wet.

Diapers will be changed:

- In accordance with requests of parents/guardians
- Consistent with children's physical and emotional abilities
- In compliance with state regulations

If parents/guardians bring a diaper cream, the medication policy applies, and must be followed. Baby powder is not allowed.

### **Toilet Training**

Toilet (or potty) training is a milestone in the life of both children and parents. This developmental phase usually begins around the age of 24 months. Positive toilet training will only occur after a child has exhibited signs of readiness and physical control. A Child's Place will work with parents to create a low-stress environment, where a child can experience success during this momentous undertaking.

Daily activity notes (Procare Connect) are documented for children who are toilet training, and the following guidelines are observed in the classrooms:

- Children must be supervised during toilet training and shall be encouraged for their efforts and accomplishments.
- Toilet training shall not be coerced, nor shall children be punished emotionally or physically for soiling, wetting, or not using the toilet.

- Families will provide sufficient extra clothing, including underwear for children to change into in the event of an accident. Extra clothes should be replaced daily.
- Families will be kept updated on their child's progress through the use of Procure Connect and daily verbal communication.

### **Child Injuries and Tracking**

If your child sustains an injury, you will receive an electronic Incident Report via Procure Connect, which will outline the course of action taken by the staff member. Minor wounds such as scrapes, cuts, or bites will be washed with soap and cool water, then rinsed. A bandage or dressing may be applied if required. You will be contacted immediately if there is any type of swelling on the face or head or your child requires medical attention. If a serious injury occurs, your child will be transported by ambulance to the closest hospital.

Parents/guardians will be contacted immediately so they can meet their child at the hospital. One of our staff will accompany your child until you arrive.

A Child's Place tracks illness and injuries at our locations. We do this in order to determine if an action plan is required in order to reduce illness or injuries from occurring. Your school's Director utilizes a monthly logbook for tracking purposes and evaluates events on a regular basis with her/his Executive Director.

### **Biting**

Biting is a normal stage of development commonly seen in infants and toddlers. While this is a natural occurrence in young children, it can cause stress and anxiety for everyone involved.

Brief episodes of biting do not mean a child is having a social or emotional problem but are indicative of your child going through this developmental stage. Usually, the biting resolves quickly.

A Child's Place will respond quickly when a biting incident occurs at school. Our teachers will care for the child who was bit and help the biter learn a more appropriate way of interacting with classmates. We will examine the circumstances surrounding the biting incident and make changes to the environment if we feel that will help prevent future biting. We will inform parents/guardians by way of an Incident Report of the biting incident.

Biting may occur for any of the following reasons:

- Oral exploration
- Teething
- Hunger
- Fatigue
- Lack of awareness that biting hurts
- Frustration, anxiety or stress
- Inability to express feelings or needs verbally.
- Mimicking behavior

- Inexperienced peer interactions
- Showing affection
- Exploring cause and effect relationships
- Exploring holding on to and letting go relationships.
- Making an impact
- Impulsiveness and lack of self-control
- Excitement and overstimulation

### **Reporting Abuse and Neglect**

Individuals who work with children are Mandated Reporters and are required by law to make a report to the appropriate state authorities if they have cause to believe or suspect a child is suffering from abuse or neglect. ACP staff are required to receive Mandated Reporter training within 45 days of hire. It is not required that parents/guardians be informed if a report is made, and ACP will cooperate fully with local child protective services throughout the investigation.

### **Supervision**

A Child's Place complies with the state regulations regarding child supervision. Teachers must always have children within sight and sound. Learning environments are set up so children can be always supervised. Furniture is placed with minimal obstruction so children can be seen from various vantage points. All furniture is kept waist high or shorter, which enhances visibility. Small spaces are kept clutter-free and big spaces are set up so children can be observed easily. Primary care groups are utilized which assign each child to a teacher for purposes of tracking and transitioning throughout the day.

### **Covid -19 Safety**

A Child's Place follows all CDC guidelines regarding mitigation of Covid 19.

Staff are required to wear gloves during diaper changing, food preparation and infant/toddler direct feeding.

Children's hands will be washed immediately upon entering classroom with the help of the teacher.

If a child becomes ill during the day, (running a fever of 100.4, cough, lethargic, etc.) parents will be called to pick up their child. Children who become ill during the day will be removed from their classroom and will stay with a teacher or Director (in a designated area of the school where they will not come into contact with other children or staff).

While vaccination is not required, we do ask parents provide a child's vaccination status for record keeping purposes.

Visitors, including parent tours, will not be permitted in the building during school hours.

Tuition is due and required to hold a child's space regardless of a child's absence from the program for illness, quarantine and/or closure due to Covid-19. Closures related to a pandemic or government mandate would not be subject to a refund or credit as these situations are considered beyond ACP control.

## POLICIES AND PROCEDURES

### **Registration and Enrollment Process (Early Learning Centers)**

Registration for A Child's Place, Early Learning Centers, is open to children from 6 weeks to 5 years old. It is recommended that families call or email the school they are interested in attending to schedule a tour. During the tour, you will be able to learn more about the center, visit classrooms, be introduced to staff and have questions answered. If parents wish to register their child after the initial visit, they will complete an online registration. After the online registration is complete, parents will receive a welcome email with additional information. Registration is accepted on a year-round basis.

Initial enrollment is contingent upon receipt of the completed emergency contact form, signed tuition agreement, registration fee and recent doctor signed physical with immunization records (recent=within the past 12 months of start date). The contents of your child's file must be reviewed every six months in accordance with Department of Human Services regulations. Please update our office if any changes occur before or after the six-month review.

## **Registration and Enrollment Process (School Districts)**

Registration for A Child's Place, School District Programs, is open to students who attend school in any district that we are contracted to provide care. Registration opens in the spring, for the upcoming school year, and is completed utilizing our online registration process. There are certain times of year that registration is closed, including the two weeks before school starts and the week after school starts. Registration is taken on a first come, first-serve basis and subject to space constraints. We accept enrollment year-round as space permits.

Initial enrollment is contingent upon receipt of the completed emergency contact form, signed tuition agreement, registration fee and recent doctor signed physical with immunization records (recent=within the past 12 months of start date). The contents of your child's file must be reviewed every six months in accordance with Department of Human Services regulations. Please update our office if any changes occur before or after the six-month review.

## **Tuition and Fees**

Tuition is due in advance of the period of service via credit card/ACH or recurring payment (Tuition Express).

Tuition is due and required to hold a child's space regardless of a child's absence from the program for any reason (including holidays, vacation, illness, Covid-19, etc.) or closure due to situations beyond ACP's control (inclement weather, power outages, etc.). Closures related to a pandemic or government mandate would not be subject to a refund or credit as these situations are considered beyond ACP control.

ACP charges a 1% processing fee for all credit card transactions that does not exceed our cost of acceptance. For your convenience, tuition paid via ACH or check will avoid this fee.

Families enrolled for occasional use must keep a credit card/ACH on file as it will be charged monthly for the previous month's usage.

If tuition is not paid by the due date, a late fee will be assessed as per your tuition agreement. When a payment is delinquent, a late fee will be incurred and care may be suspended, and your child's space will be unreserved until the balance is fully paid and current.

Tuition discounts are applicable only if tuition is paid on time. The full-tuition rate, plus any additional late fees will be charged when tuition payments are late. The sibling discount will be permanently discontinued if payment is late more than three times.

A non-refundable registration fee is charged each school year in the school district programs for the selected start date.

A Child's Place offers numerous discounts and scholarships including sibling, military, and (contracted) school district employee discounts. Please ask your Director or Billing/Registration Coordinator about our need-based scholarships if you would like to apply.

## **Early Learning Resource Center (ELRC)**

A Child's Place accepts ELRC (Early Learning Resource Center) subsidy payments. If you indicated on the registration packet that you receive funding, please reach out to your ELRC eligibility specialist to inform them of your registration status with A Child's Place.

If you do not currently have ELRC but would like to see if you qualify, please visit [the Child Care Works website](#) to review their guidelines. Child Care Works is a state and federal subsidized childcare program managed by the Early Learning Resource Center (ELRC), formerly CCIS. If you meet the requirements, ELRC will pay a part of your childcare cost (subsidy payment). After looking at the guidelines, please follow the steps on the COMPASS website to apply if you think you might be eligible.

If you have a copay through ELRC, please note that copays are charged weekly each Monday and due by 6:00pm each Tuesday. Please note that delinquencies are assessed a \$15 late fee and reported to ELRC.

## **Notification of Schedule Changes and Withdraw from Program**

Notice of intent to withdraw from a school district program must be given to the billing/registration coordinator **by the 15th** of the month prior to the withdrawal. Notice of intent to withdraw from an early learning center should be given at least a week prior to the withdrawal. Should you withdraw your child from an early learning center and re-enroll later, a new registration fee will be applied.

A permanent change in your child's scheduled days of attendance or full/part-time status must be communicated via email to your Director (centers) or Billing/Registration Coordinator (school districts) **by the 15<sup>th</sup> of the month prior to the change going into effect.**

To provide the appropriate child supervision and schedule staff accordingly, families are asked to follow the schedule they choose for their child. If a schedule change (hours or days) becomes necessary, you must request so via email to your Director (centers) or Billing/Registration Coordinator (school districts). We will reply to your request within 48 hours, letting you know when your new schedule can begin.

While we make every effort to accommodate schedule changes, there will be times when we cannot do so due to classroom capacity restrictions or staff schedules. If you have an emergency and need to alter your child's schedule, do not hesitate to call your Director.

## **Drop-off and Pick-up**

Parents/guardians are responsible for physically walking their child into and out of their care location and should ensure that the student has been signed in and in the care of ACP staff. Car line drop off and pick is not permitted at any location. This ensures that each child is safe and always supervised and encourages daily communication between families and staff. Children must be checked out by the adult picking up using Procure Connect. Teachers ensure safety throughout the day with roll calls, head counts and transition tracking sheets to sign children out/in whenever they leave or enter a classroom.

Children must be always under direct adult supervision while on the premises; parents or guardians are responsible for children once they are checked out. Children will be released only to parents, legal guardians or persons whose names are listed on the Emergency Contact Form. Authorized persons doing a pick-up will be required to show photo ID. For safety and trust of the children in our care, we will not release a child to a person the child does not know.

For school-aged programs, students are dismissed from before care at the start of the school day and walk to their classrooms independently. After care students are dismissed from their classroom at the end of the school day and walk directly to the ACP room independently, located in the school building. Attendance is taken immediately and all student whereabouts are verified at sign-in.

If your child will be picked up by a person who is listed on the Emergency Contact Form but who does not regularly pick up your child, you must provide the center with prior, advanced verbal notice. If your child will be picked up by a person who is not on the Emergency Contact Form, you must provide the center with prior, advanced written notice. Additionally, the authorized pick up person should be at least 18 years old with valid photo identification.

If A Child's Place has reasonable cause to suspect that any person picking up a child is a danger to a child in any way (under the influence of drugs or alcohol; physically or emotionally impaired in any way) pick-up will be refused and we will attempt to contact the other parent/guardian or authorized persons as listed on the Child Release section of the Emergency Contact Form. If alternative arrangements cannot be made, the local police will be called, as required by state licensing.

### **Child Custody**

A Child's Place strives to remain neutral in all custody disputes so that all parents feel equally welcome at the center. Legally, unless A Child's Place is provided with a copy of a custody order, restraining order, or court-ordered visitation schedule that designates otherwise, we cannot deny a parent or guardian access to his or her child. We require all families to resolve their differences or unsettled court orders through legal channels. ACP cannot be used as a place for scheduled visitations, nor can we be responsible for supervising a parent or guardian during visits.

### **Late Pick-Up**

Children should be picked up by their scheduled time. If an emergency occurs that prevents you from picking your child up, you should notify your Director immediately. Please allow enough time to arrive, pick your child up, and leave by closing time.

Children left in our care after hours will be supervised for as long as possible. If we are not contacted by a parent, we will attempt to contact the parents/guardians. If we are unable to reach you, we will attempt to reach the emergency contacts you have listed on your registration paperwork. If we are unable to reach anyone after one hour, the local police will be called, as required by state licensing.

A fee of \$1.00 per minute, per child, will be charged for late pick-ups. Three violations of this policy within a three-month period could/will result in disenrolling a family from our program.

### **Program Placement**

Children are placed in classrooms based on chronological age, individual development, and space availability. State regulations specify the age range and number of children that may be enrolled in each classroom.

## **Absence**

If your child will be absent from school (center), please notify your director at least 30 minutes before their scheduled drop-off time. If your child is absent due to contagious illness, please let your director know so that other families may be alerted to look for symptoms in their children.

For the School District, please call or text the onsite teacher via the program cell phone.

## **Inclement Weather**

The school age programs follow the inclement weather policy outlined by the school district in respective contracts. If the school district opens with a delay, the before care program will open with the same delay. For example, if there is a 2 hour delay the program will open at 9:00 am instead of 7:00 am. If the district closes early due to inclement weather, A Child's Place will make every effort to stay open until our 6pm closing time, however we may close to ensure the safety of our children and staff. If we must close early, parents will be notified by email and/or text. If the district closes altogether, it will be at the discretion of ACP will likely close as well.

Early learning programs may be closed in the event of severe weather. Decisions to close are made by the CEO and based on the conditions in specific areas. Tuition will not be refunded due to closing.

## **Non-Discrimination and Confidentiality**

A Child's Place provides programs to children without regard to race, religion, color, creed, gender, cultural heritage, parent/guardian marital status, parent/guardian sexual orientation, disability or special needs, medical condition or any other consideration made unlawful by federal, state or local laws.

The Americans with Disabilities Act requires that reasonable accommodations be provided to people with disabilities. The law covers children with disabilities seeking reasonable accommodation in a childcare setting as well as the parents/guardians being served. ACP will conduct an individualized assessment of a particular child and engage in an interactive dialogue with parents/guardians/caregivers and medical professionals to identify reasonable accommodations and safely integrate a child into our program given each individual's capability. If it is determined, a child's disabilities cannot be accommodated reasonably, we will recommend parent's find an alternate care provider.

Any information regarding a child, a child's family or other matters will be held in the utmost confidence.

## **Children's Records**

The information in your child's file is considered confidential. Only persons directly related to the care of your child, management, and regulatory agencies will have access to your child's file and the information

contained within it. ACP keeps child files for seven years after disenrollment from the program at which time the contents are shredded.

Occasionally, parents will be required to update the information contained in your child's file. State regulations require health assessments to be updated frequently (at the time of each well-visit). Emergency Contact Forms will be updated every six months along with Tuition Agreement. If information changes before the scheduled six-month update, you should share the new information with your Director promptly.

Children attending our school district programs will be required to submit a new registration packet each new school year.

### **Classroom Observation**

As part of the center's activities, authorized outside childcare professionals may occasionally observe children in their classrooms. If this occurs, families will be notified, and the confidentiality of child information will be maintained. Additionally, as part of our hiring process, teacher candidates may spend supervised time in the classroom with our regular staff.

### **Student Dress Code**

School district programs will abide by the dress code set forth by the respective school district. Children attending the early learning centers should be dressed for fun and play. Clothing should be appropriate to the season and include outerwear in the winter (hats, mittens, boots). Children attending the early learning centers should also have a weather appropriate change of clothes. Please label all your child's belongings. Closed-toed shoes must be worn year-round.

ACP is not responsible for any personal belongings that have been brought to school/ACP.

### **Toys from Home/Electronics**

ACP does not permit children to bring in toys from home, with the exception of, a teacher directed activity. If the toy is being used, the staff reserve the right to hold the toy until parent pick-up.

Electronics from home (cell phones, smart watches, tablets, kindles, i-Pads, etc.) are not permitted to be out during ACP hours. Exceptions will be made for virtual learning. If the electronic device is not being used for virtual learning, staff reserve the right to hold the device until parent pick-up.

### **Taking Photos/Videos**

There will be times when a photo/video of the children will be taken during school activities and events. These photos/videos are used to keep families involved and informed of various activities throughout the school year. Sometimes, we utilize these photos in internal communications with families.

Upon enrollment, you will be asked to sign a video/photo consent form allowing us to photograph your child for these reasons. You may opt-out of such communication and your child's teacher will be informed of your request.

ACP will post photos/videos to social media sites from time to time, showcasing activities and events in our schools. We will obtain specific permission from families to post such photos/videos before they are posted. You may indicate on your photo/video release if you consent to such posting, however, we will still obtain specific permission each time a post is made.

### **Babysitting by Center Staff**

In an effort to maintain a professional relationship and prevent any conflicts of interest, A Child's Place strongly discourages babysitting by staff. If a staff member chooses to babysit for a family, all such activities must occur outside ACP premises and with the understanding that such arrangements and payment for services are solely between the staff member and the child's family, and that ACP is in no way responsible for the child's care in connection with these activities. Such actions are not sanctioned by A Child's Place.

### **Child Illness Policy**

Our child illness policy is based upon the standards developed by the American Academy of Pediatrics. Parents and Guardians can help prevent the spread of germs, viruses, and other illnesses by keeping your contagious child home until they are symptom free.

#### **\*UPDATED FOR COMPLIANCE WITH COVID-19 GUIDELINES**

The following are symptoms of Covid-19/Coronavirus. Children will not be permitted to attend school if any of these symptoms are present.

- **Fever (≥ 100.4 degrees Fahrenheit, 38 degrees Celsius)**
- **Cough**
- **Shortness of breath or difficulty breathing**
- Diarrhea
- Chills and/or repeated shaking with chills
- Muscle pain
- Headache
- Sore throat
- New loss of taste or smell

Mild illnesses are common among children. In these cases, we try to keep children comfortable throughout the day, but will find it necessary to exclude them from care for the reasons listed below:

- Illness that prevents the child from participating in program activities
- Illness that prevents a child from being able to go outside.
- Illness that results in a greater need for care than our staff can provide without compromising the health and safety of other children.

- Fever: 100 degrees (underarm reading) and behavior change and other signs and symptoms such lethargy, rash, irritability, sore throat, vomiting, diarrhea, constant crying, or difficulty breathing
- Vomiting in the past 24 hours
- Diarrhea— Children will be excluded if the frequency exceeds two or more stools above normal for that child. Diapered children with diarrhea will be excluded if the stools cannot be contained within the diaper. Potty trained children will be excluded if they cannot make it to the toilet causing accidents.
- Mouth sores with drooling unless the child’s physician produces a note stating that the child is not contagious.
- Conjunctivitis (pink eye)— the child may return 24 hours after treatment has started.
- Impetigo—the child may return 24 hours after treatment has started.
- Head Lice—after treatment and free from eggs and nits
- Strep Throat— the child may return 24 hours after treatment has started.
- Scabies— the child may return 24 hours after treatment has started.
- Rash with Fever or any behavioral change until a medical provider has determined the child is not contagious.

For your child’s comfort and to reduce the risk of spreading germs, we ask that your child be picked up within the hour of notification. Children who have been excluded from care may return when they are free of fever, vomiting, or diarrhea for 24 hours, or they have been treated by an antibiotic and are able to participate in all activities, including outside time. If it is less than 24 hours and you believe your child is free to return to care, we need medical provider documentation stating the child is no longer contagious and may return. The final decision whether to exclude a child from the program due to illness will be made by the childcare center.

### **Reportable Communicable Diseases**

In order to maintain the health and safety of all children and staff, A Child's Place abides by all recommendations made by our public health agencies.

Reportable illness includes, but are not limited, to the following:

- Bacterial meningitis
- Chicken pox
- Hemophilus influenza (invasive)
- Hepatitis A
- Measles (including suspected)
- Meningococcal infection (invasive)
- Pertussis
- Poliomyelitis (including suspected)
- Rabies (human only)
- Rubella congenital and non-congenital (including suspected)
- Tetanus
- Any cluster/outbreak of illness

## **Medication Administration**

From time to time, children will need medication during school hours. While it is encouraged to give medication before or after school, we understand that sometimes this is not feasible. Parents are welcome to come to the center to administer medication in the Director's office.

Our program utilizes Caring For Our Children as a reference to develop and maintain our policies regarding medication administration to all children, including proper procedures for children with medical/allergy plans

When these options cannot be utilized, ACP can be authorized to administer medication to your child. The requirements for administering medication to your child are listed below:

- All prescription and nonprescription medications (Tylenol, Benadryl, Advil, etc.) will require a doctor's note verifying the child's name, dosage, and duration of the medication.
- Ointments, lotions, sunscreens, insect repellents and remedies for diaper rash will require a parent/guardian's signed documentation.
- Prescription or nonprescription medication must be provided in the original container.
- Medication must remain in the container in which it was received.
- The current prescription label from the pharmacy with complete instructions and information will be accepted. Information includes: Child's Name, name of medication and proper dosage, time to be administered, current date, name and telephone number of physicians. Medication will only be administered to the child whose name appears on the label.
- Medication spoons, cups or syringes must be provided and labeled, or medication cannot be administered.
- If the label does not contain all necessary information, medication cannot be administered.
- Medication doses will be tracked on the Medication Log. All unused medications will be returned to the parent/guardian.
- Please give the first dose of medication at home to monitor side effects.
- Expired medication will not be administered.
- Medication cannot be administered via a child's milk or water bottle.
- All medication must be given to the director. Do not leave ointments or medications in backpacks, cubbies, or lunchboxes.
- Any changes in medication/dosages require updated documentation from the medical provider.

## **Nutrition/Meals and Snacks**

A Child's Place believes healthy meals and snacks are critical to a child's development. Additionally, we incorporate nutrition and exercise into our curriculum in an effort to encourage healthy lifelong habits. ACP encourages parents to pack healthy snacks and meals that include plenty of water. Limiting juice and sweets and including plenty of fruits and vegetables at each meal to ensure optimal nutrition and energy throughout the day.

We suggest that you use insulated lunch bags and ice packs to keep food cool and thermoses to keep food warm. To ensure food stays at the proper temperature, extra ice packs may be required when dairy products are included in your child's lunch.

## **Special Occasions**

A Child's Place allows parents to bring special snacks/treats to school to celebrate a child's birthday. Please talk to your child's teachers/Director to find out if there are any allergies or food restrictions in your child's classroom ahead of time. Covid-19 restrictions may apply.

## **Suspending a Child's Enrollment**

A Child's Place seeks to accommodate a wide range of individual differences; however, on occasion, a child's behavior may warrant the need to find a more suitable setting for care. Some examples of reasons a child may be suspended/disenrolled from our program include:

- A child who cannot participate safely in our program or appears to be a danger to him/herself or others despite our best efforts to reasonably reduce the risk of harm or injury.
- The conclusion, by medical, psychological, school district or social service personnel working with the center or child, that continued care at the center/program could be harmful to or not in the best interest of the child.
- Any other situation, in which the accommodations needed for the child's success in the program conflict with the fundamental nature of our group environment or when a different environment is in the best interest of the child or the center/program.

Anytime a child's behavior becomes a concern to a teacher, written documentation and family communication will begin as the first steps to understanding the child's individual needs and challenges, and to evaluate these needs in the context of our program.

## **Disenrolling a Family**

Our programs are based on developing partnerships and supporting families; however, despite our best efforts, on rare occasions, a parent's/guardian's actions or requests may warrant the need to find a more suitable setting for themselves and their child. Some examples of such instances include but are not limited to:

- A parent/guardian fails to abide by ACP policies, or those requirements imposed by the appropriate licensing agency.
- A parent/guardian demands special services that are not provided to other children and that cannot reasonably be delivered by the program (including requests that are outside the philosophy of the program)
- A parent/guardian is physically or verbally abusive to ACP staff, administrators, children, or anyone else at the center (including via social media)
- Violations of our Code of Conduct

## **Inclusion and Suspension/Expulsion Policy**

This is to include steps we take as an early learning program to work with supporting inclusion of all children.

When our staff observe a child with a need that is not already identified with an IEP we take specific steps to meet the needs of the child. We participate and support our staff and families by providing resources that support inclusion opportunities and limit suspension and expulsion for all children.

When our staff notice a student with a need that is not being met, we complete documented observations noting our findings. The teachers will also complete an updated Ages and Stages Questionnaire for the child's age level. Then the staff present it to the director with any concerns they may have found.

Our director will complete observations and documentation to see if their findings match what the teachers have witnessed. Once the staff and director notice the same needs not being met, the director reaches out to their Executive Director to share what was observed. Next, we ask for a family conference to discuss our findings from our observations. This is a great tool to open it up to see if the parents have noticed anything at home.

Then we suggest to the parents that we would like to reach out to the PA Keys to have a consultation from the Infant/Early Childhood Mental Health Services. The director will then fill out the Request for IECMHC services form and get the services started from the agency to see if the child qualifies for any services. We will also work closely with the Key to see if there is professional development our staff can do to help aid in the needs that need to be met. Our goal is to include all children and make reasonable accommodation in the classroom and avoid suspension and or expulsion from our program.

### **Center/Program Security**

No one should allow a person unknown to him/her to enter any door to the center/school at any time. All unknown persons should be directed to use the main entrance. Persons who are authorized to pick-

up children should have their photo identification ready for ACP staff. Photo identification will be checked before access will be allowed into the center/program.

Doors should never be propped open and should be securely closed upon entering the building and exiting the building.

### **Contingency plans for Pandemic or Government Mandates**

A Child's Place follows all CDC guidelines regarding emergency preparedness.

Staff are required to wear gloves during diaper changing, food preparation and infant/toddler direct feeding.

Children's hands will be washed immediately upon entering classroom with the help of the teacher.

If a child becomes ill during the day, (running a fever of 100.4, cough, lethargic, etc.) parents will be called to pick up their child. Children who become ill during the day, will be removed from their classroom and will stay with a teacher or Director (in a designated area of the school where they will not come into contact with other children or staff).

While vaccination is not required, we do ask parents provide a child's vaccination status for record keeping purposes.

Visitors, including parent tours, will not be permitted in the building during school hours.

Tuition is due and required to hold a child's space regardless of a child's absence from the program for illness, quarantine and/or closure due to emergency closings. Closures related to a pandemic or government mandate would not be subject to a refund or credit as these situations are considered beyond ACP control.

## Cleaning and Disinfecting Protocol effective May 2020

### Cleaning and Disinfecting Hard Surfaces

- Staff will wear disposable gloves
- Surfaces will be cleaned using soap and water
- Surfaces will be disinfected
- Cleaning of frequently touched surfaces will take place throughout the day
- High touch surfaces include: Tables, doorknobs, light switches, countertops, handles, desks, phones, keyboards, toilets, faucets, sinks, etc.
- ACP will be using a diluted Bleach and water solution for disinfecting which follows the EPA guidelines

### Clean and Sanitize Toys

- Toys that cannot be cleaned and sanitized will not be used
- Toys that children have placed in their mouths or that are otherwise contaminated will be set aside until they are cleaned
- Toys will be cleaned with soap and water, rinsed, sanitized with disinfectant, rinsed again, and will air dry for 24 hours
- Toys will not be shared with other groups of infants or toddlers
- Toys will be rotated to allow for proper cleaning, as well as, providing enough materials for children to play
- Children's board books will be cleaned, paper books will be used in teacher directed lessons/centers only
- Soft toys will be laundered daily

### Healthy Hand Hygiene (Staff and Children)

- Staff and children will wash hands with soap and water for at least 20 seconds
- Alcohol-based hand sanitizers with at least 60% alcohol can be used if soap and water are not readily available **\*Hand sanitizer will be out of the reach of children**
- All ACP classrooms have direct access to soap and water for hand washing
- Staff will assist children with handwashing, including infants who cannot wash hands alone

ACP staff members will implement the above cleaning and disinfecting procedures continuously throughout the day. Many/most of these procedures have been utilized in the past however given the infectious nature of viruses, greater awareness will apply to maintaining a clean, germ-free school.

## Questions

Should you have any questions or concerns regarding the program your child attends, employees, or procedures, feel free to contact the Corporate Office at 610-272-8085.