



# Parent Handbook

## Mission

Our mission is to provide a safe, caring, loving environment for children and families. We strive to educate and support families about nutrition and stages of child development as their children grow. We aim to provide resources and support to our families and families of the community. To employ teachers who are competent in his/her area of expertise and share our values. We treat families and their children respectfully, professionally and with courtesy.

## Philosophy

Discover Little Miracles is committed to providing a nurturing, stimulating, value based, and safe environment for children. Our center encourages the child's intellectual, physical and social-emotional development. We believe each child is unique and has a natural curiosity to learn about his/her environment. Teachers and staff speak with the children on their level and treat all children as equals, promoting an environment of consideration and respect. We work with the children to help them learn and grow in their own unique and special way.

## Hours of Operation

Discover Little Miracles is open 6:00am – 6:00pm, Monday through Friday, operating 12 months a year. The center is closed for the following days:

New Year's Day

Memorial Day

July 4<sup>th</sup>

Labor Day

Thanksgiving Day

The Friday after Thanksgiving

Christmas Eve

Christmas Day

- The center will be closed the two days at the end of summer TBD by the NJSD School Calendar for Teacher In-service/Staff Development.
- All center holidays are charged days

## Attendance

We accept children ages 6 weeks through 12 years on a full time or part time basis.

- Full-time: more than 5 hours a day
- Part-time: less than 4 hours a day
- Children may only attend during scheduled days and times.
- A child's time in the center may not exceed 10 hours per day. Anything over 10 hours will be charged at an hourly rate, rounded up to the hour. No half hours will be calculated.
- After 6pm there will be a charge of \$1 per minute per child

- Parents must turn in a schedule for their child/ren by Thursdays at 9:00am
- If your child will be out sick, please call the center to inform administration.

## Drop-off and Pick up Procedures

### *Drop-off Procedures*

Parent will:

- Bring child into the center and check them in on the computer at the front desk, each parent/authorized person will have their own code.
- Remove child's outer clothing and place in designated cubby located in the child's classroom.
- Take child to designated morning or afternoon staff.

### *Pick-up Procedures:*

*Release of the child is only allowed to previously authorized people. (A list of approved pick-up adults must be on file. Adult chaperones may be asked to show identification).*

Parent will:

- Dress the child in outer clothing
- Read over Daily Care Sheet (2 yrs. and under)
- Notify the teacher you are leaving the center
- Check the child out on computer at front desk.

## Personal Items Needed

- Disposable diapers and wipes
- 2 changes of play clothes including socks labeled with child's name
- Over-the-counter items (sunscreen, diapers ointment, etc.) labeled with child's name
- For children ages 2 and up a fitted crib sheet for sleeping mat and a small blanket; labeled with child's name. (Not needed for infant room).
  - All Bedding, for ages 2 and up, will be sent home every Friday for proper washing
- A pillow case to put child's nap belongings in; labeled with child's name.
- Appropriate outdoor clothing for the season labeled with child's name, as children will be outdoors every day, weather permitting.
- Security blanket, toy, etc. (if needed) ages 1 and up.
- 3 ring 1-inch white binder

## Confidentiality

Confidentiality is a top priority for Discover Little Miracles. Personal information of families and staff will not be shared for any reason without prior, written consent of the individual. When discussing a child's activities and friends in the classroom, names will not be used. In situations regarding behavior problems and or incident/accident reports, names of children involved will never be given to families.

## Nutrition

Discover Little Miracles will offer nourishing certified organic foods and foods free of artificial additives, preservatives, and fillers. Family style meals are served whenever possible because it is important for children to learn to serve themselves.

1. If a child has a disabling condition or illness (physical, developmental, behavioral, or emotional) that restricts their food diet, a food substitution will be provided by the **center** when a statement signed by a licensed physician is on file. The statement must identify: the child's disability and why it restricts the child's diet, the food(s) to be omitted, and the food(s) that must be substituted.
2. Food substitutions may be provided by the **parent** for children with special dietary needs. A signed statement from a registered medical authority should identify: the special dietary need, the food(s) to be omitted from the child's diet, and the food(s) the parent will be substituting.

The meal schedule is as follows:

Breakfast	7:15-7:30 School age 8:00-8:15 One – Three-year-old classrooms 8:30-8:45 Four – Five-year-old classrooms
Lunch	11:00-11:15 One – Three-year-old classrooms 11:30-11:45 Four – Five-year-old classrooms
Afternoon Snack	2:00-2:15 One – Three-year-old classrooms 2:30-2:45 Four – Five-year-old classrooms 3:30-3:45 School Age

*\*Infants will be fed based on their own needs and schedules in accordance with home care.*

\* Children who receive snack at 2/2:30 pm will receive a supplemental snack if they are in attendance at 5pm.

"In accordance with Federal civil rights law and U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) civil rights regulations and policies, the USDA, its Agencies, offices, and employees, and institutions participating in or administering USDA programs are prohibited from discriminating based on race, color, national origin, sex, disability, age, or reprisal or retaliation for prior civil rights activity in any program or activity conducted or funded by USDA.

Persons with disabilities who require alternative means of communication for program information (e.g. Braille, large print, audiotape, American Sign Language, etc.), should contact the Agency (State or local) where they applied for benefits. Individuals who are deaf, hard of hearing or have speech disabilities may contact USDA through the Federal Relay Service at (800) 877-8339. Additionally, program information may be made available in languages other than English.

To file a program complaint of discrimination, complete the [USDA Program Discrimination Complaint Form](#), (AD-3027) found online at: [http://www.ascr.usda.gov/complaint\\_filing\\_cust.html](http://www.ascr.usda.gov/complaint_filing_cust.html), and at any USDA office, or write a letter addressed to USDA and provide in the letter all of the information requested in the form. To request a copy of the complaint form, call (866) 632-9992. Submit your completed form or letter to USDA by:

(1) Mail: U.S. Department of Agriculture

Office of the Assistant Secretary for Civil Rights

1400 Independence Avenue, SW  
Washington, D.C. 20250-9410;

(2) Fax: (202) 690-7442; or

(3) Email: [program.intake@usda.gov](mailto:program.intake@usda.gov)

This institution is an equal opportunity provider.

## Breastfeeding Policy

Discover Little Miracles Child Care Center is committed to providing ongoing support to breastfeeding mothers. Well-defined research has documented a multitude of health benefits to both the mother and infant. Discover Little Miracles Child Care Center subscribes to the following policy:

**Breastfeeding mothers shall be provided a place to breastfeed or express their milk.**

Breastfeeding mothers, including employees, shall be provided a private sanitary place to breastfeed their babies or express milk. This area provides an electrical outlet, comfortable chair, and nearby access to running water.

**A refrigerator will be made available for storage of expressed breast milk.** Breastfeeding mothers and employees may store their expressed breast milk in the center refrigerator. Mothers should provide their own containers, clearly labeled with name and date. The center will follow guidelines from the American Academy of Pediatrics and Centers for Disease Control in ensuring that breast milk is properly treated to avoid waste. Universal precautions are not required in handling human milk.

**Sensitivity will be shown to breastfeeding mothers and their babies.** The childcare center is committed to providing ongoing support to breastfeeding mothers, including providing an opportunity to breastfeed their baby in the morning and evening, and holding off giving a bottle, if possible, when mom is due to arrive. Artificial baby milks (formula) and solid foods will not be provided unless the mother has requested. Babies will be held closely when feeding and bottles will never be propped.

**Staff should be trained in handling human milk.** All childcare center staff will be trained in the proper storage and handling of human milk, as well as ways to support breastfeeding mothers.

**Breastfeeding employees shall be provided flexible breaks to accommodate breastfeeding or milk expression.** Breastfeeding employees shall be provided a flexible schedule for breastfeeding or pumping to provide breast milk for their children. The time allowed would not exceed the normal time allowed for lunch and breaks. For time above and beyond normal lunch and breaks, sick/annual leave must be used, or the employee can come in a little earlier or leave a little late to make up the time.

**Breastfeeding promotion information will be displayed.** The center will provide information on breastfeeding, including the names of area resources should questions or problems arise. In addition, positive promotion of breastfeeding will be on display in the center.

### Developmentally Appropriate Curriculum

Our program is tailored to meet the needs of children, rather than expecting children to adjust to the demands of a specific program. The program provides a safe and nurturing environment that promotes the physical, social, emotional, and cognitive development of young children.

Child initiated, teacher supported play is an essential component of this developmentally appropriate curriculum.

To meet the developmental needs of each child, the educational program will provide the opportunity for:

1. Active quiet play
2. Outdoor activities (weather permitting)
3. Individual, small, and large group activities
4. Experiences that allow for learning at the child's own level
5. Creative Expression
6. Intellectual Stimulation
7. Language Development
8. Multicultural and diversified experiences

Each child will be evaluated on an on-going basis by the Lead Teachers in the classroom. Parent/Teacher conferences will be scheduled twice a year so the parent and the teacher have an opportunity to discuss the child's developmental progress.

Core values and manners will be emphasized to all children throughout the learning experience. Respect for them and others will be promoted, both through model and positive reinforcement. The Center will recognize holidays including: New Year's Day, Easter, Memorial Day, July 4th, Thanksgiving, and Christmas. These holidays will be incorporated in that weeks' program.

### Continuity of Care

Discover Little Miracles strives to have one or two consistent staff members that lead classrooms every day. Children form stronger and more secure attachments to adult caregivers who are consistently available to them. Having continuity of care is critical to the emotional growth and development of children.

### Room Transitions

Your child will transition to a new classroom when he/she has reached the age for next classroom. As the time for a transition to a new room approaches, you will receive a letter containing information about your child's transition into his/her new classroom. Both your child's current and future teacher will be available to address any questions or concerns you have during the transition process.

## Parent Participation

Parent participation is encouraged in our program. Some possible opportunities to participate and contribute to your child's Discover Little Miracles experience:

- Field trip supervision
- Eating lunch or snack with your child – please inform the teachers one day in advance
- Volunteering in your child's classroom

## Assessment Portfolios

An assessment portfolio will be kept for each child, and passed to the next teacher when a child transitions. The assessment portfolio will contain a variety of items, including photographs, artwork, and assessment profiles. When a child leaves Discover Little Miracles, the portfolio will be given to the family.

## Video Camera Policy

Discover Little Miracles has closed circuit video camera(s) on site. The video cameras will strictly be used for teacher observation purposes only. To clarify: this means observations for staff portfolios, knowing what things to improve upon, as well as their strengths. This decision was made based on several conversations with our state licensing department. The camera(s) will be limited to classrooms only. According to our licensing representative; if deemed necessary, law enforcement, child protective services, and the state licensor, as well as Discover Little Miracles administration will view the recordings in the event that disciplinary actions need to be taken.

## Education Policy

Developmentally Appropriate Curriculum:

Our program is tailored to meet the needs of children, rather than expecting children to adjust to the demands of a specific program. The program provides a safe and nurturing environment that promotes physical, social, emotional, and cognitive development of young children.

Discover Little Miracles will be using The Creative Curriculum Framework aligned with the Wisconsin Model Early Learning Standards in each of our classrooms. Creative Curriculum focuses primarily on



giving teachers guidelines for setting up their classroom using eleven interest areas and instructional strategies to ensure that all aspects of a child's development (social, emotional, cognitive, and physical) are addressed. Our fundamental goal is to help young children use their environment productively, and allow them to discover themselves as individuals and independent learners. The framework of The Creative Curriculum includes: setting up a healthy room environment, working with parents and guiding the children to use problem solving strategies, building social skills, and meeting objective goals. Play enables children to progress along the developmental sequence from the sensorimotor intelligence of infancy, to preoperational thought in the preschool years, to the concrete operational thinking exhibited by primary children. In addition to its role in cognitive development, play also serves important functions in children's physical, emotional, and social development. Child initiated, child directed, teacher supported play is an essential component of this developmentally appropriate curriculum. To meet the developmental needs of each child, the educational program will provide the opportunity for:

- o Active quiet play
- o Outdoor activities (weather permitting)
- o Individual, small, and large group activities
- o Experiences that allow for learning at the child's own level
- o Creative Expression
- o Intellectual Stimulation
- o Language Development
- o Multicultural and diversified experiences

#### Specific Infant/Toddler Educational Policies:

- o Infants and toddlers will have specialized care based on their own needs and schedules in accordance with home care.
- o Infants' positions and locations will be changed several times throughout the day
- o Infants will have freedom of movement in a safe, clean, open, warm, and uncluttered environment
- o Each child will receive physical contact and attention by being held, rocked, spoken, and sung to
- o Feeding, naptime, and diapering will be used for language development and learning experiences

#### School-age Children:

School-age children will have a quiet place to study, if needed, and have the opportunity to use large muscle equipment outdoors (weather permitting). There will also be a variety of activities for them to participate in indoors.

Early A.M. & Late afternoon care for all children:

6:00am- 8:30am & 3:30pm- 6:00pm

\*Supervised free play/ study time, arrival, and departure and Parent/Teacher communication

-Parents and Teachers may also set up specific times to meet and discuss the child's progress as needed.

Core values and manners will be emphasized to all children throughout the learning experience. Respect for themselves and others will be promoted strongly, both through modeling and positive reinforcement. The Center will recognize holidays including: New Year's Day, Easter, Memorial Day, July 4<sup>th</sup>, Thanksgiving, and Christmas. These holidays will be incorporated in that weeks' program.

## Health Policy

### **Child Health Information:**

Each child shall have an initial examination by a physician, not more than 1 year prior to, nor later than 90 days after admission. Children under 2 years shall be given a physical exam, by a physician, every 6 months after admission; verification of this must be on file. Children over 2 will need a physical every 2 years. School-age children, who are enrolled in school, need only a health history completed by the parents. Parents must list known allergies.

### **Illness in Children:**

Sick children may not be brought in for care. Should your child become ill while in care, administration will assess the situation to determine if you should be called. Please make arrangements to pick up the child within one hour of notification. Every child will be observed upon entry for signs of illness, as well as throughout the day.

Your child must remain out of the center for 24 hours when the following conditions occur:

- Any undiagnosed rash
- Intestinal disturbances (diarrhea, vomiting), diarrhea is three or more loose stools in one day. Watery stools will be under our discretion.
- Sore or discharging eyes, ears, or profuse nasal discharge
- Temperature over 101 degrees
- Head Lice, there cannot be any nits

It is required that we have on file the names, addresses and phone numbers of persons authorized to pick up your child if you cannot be reached. These are the only individuals,

other than parents that a child will be released to, unless written notification is received from parents.

If a child is excused because of a suspected communicable disease, the families of the other exposed children shall be notified by the Director or Teacher and such children shall be watched for symptoms of the disease. In cases of bacterial infections, there shall be a statement that he/she is free of the infectious stage from a physician for re-admission. A child may be re-admitted, without use of medication, after a communicable disease without a statement from a physician if they are symptom free for at least 24 hours.

### Biting Policy

Biting is a behavior that usually appears between the ages of one and three years. While biting is an age-appropriate behavior, it is important to remember it is also an unacceptable behavior in a childcare environment. Children bite for a variety of reasons: teething, sensory exploration, cause and effect, imitation, crowding, seeking attention, frustration, and stress. Biting is not something to blame on children, their parents or their teachers. There are a variety of strategies we implement at Discover Little Miracles to prevent and stop biting. This is the process followed when a child bites:

- The biting child is stopped and told, "Stop biting. Biting hurts" in a firm voice. Teachers should remain calm. Being careful not to show anger or frustration towards the child.
- The biting child is removed from the situation. Depending upon the observed motive for the bite, the separation may include re-direction or meeting the child's needs. As little attention as possible will be placed on the biting child, to avoid reinforcing the behavior.
- Appropriate first aid will be provided to the child who was bitten. Bite will be washed with soap and water; cold compress will be applied to reduce pain and swelling. A bandage will be applied if necessary.

It is important to explore the reasons for biting when it occurs. Teachers need to work with parents to gather information about the child's behavior and begin observations to determine the reasons for biting. Examples of triggers would be: communication deficits, transitions, hunger, lack of sleep need for oral stimulation or teething pain. Once triggers are identified, staff can work on prevention strategies and start teaching replacement skills. Below are the steps the teacher will take to identify triggers and replace the behavior:

1. The teacher will examine the context in which the biting is occurring and look for patterns. The following questions should be asked:
  - a. Was the space too crowded?
  - b. Were there too few toys?
  - c. Was there too little to do or too much waiting?
  - d. Was the child who bit getting the attention and care he/she deserved at other times?
2. The teacher will change the environment, routines, or activities if necessary.
3. The teacher will work with the child who is biting to resolve conflicts and frustrations in more appropriate ways.
4. The teacher will observe the child, to get an idea of why and when they are likely to bite.
5. The teacher will identify children likely to be bitten and make special efforts to reduce their chance of being bitten.
6. The teacher, parent, director and/or program coordinator will meet regularly to regulate an action plan and measure outcomes.
7. If biting continues the teacher will observe the group more closely and work with the parents to seek out additional resources as necessary to shadow the child who is biting.

All information is confidential and names of the children involved in the incident are not shared between parents. In addition, biting is always documented on an incident/accident report which is completed and signed by a teacher and parent. The original is kept in the child's permanent enrollment file in the office.

### First Aid & Medication Administration

Bandages and ice packs will be available at all times. Soap and water will be used to clean all superficial wounds. For major and questionable injuries, parents will be contacted. If necessary, the child will be transported to the hospital, where the teacher will remain with the child until a parent arrives to take responsibility. (Parents written permission to call the family physician or refer the child for medical care in case of an accident or emergency must be on file.) Parents will be notified of minor injuries when they pick up their child.

If medication must be given, it will be with the parent's written permission. Medication will be labeled and stored with parental consent forms in a sealed box out of the children's reach. If prescription medication is to be administered, it must be in the original container with the physician's name, date, and prescribed dosage. All over the counter medication which does not have specified dosage on the label for the age and weight of an individual

child, must have signed instruction from your personal physician before being administered. Instructions and times given will be posted and noted in our medical log. All accidents, medicine administration, and conditions of child upon entry will be logged. If your child has had accident at home that may cause a bruise or bump, scratch or cut, please tell us at the time of arrival.

### Emergency Evacuation Policy

All staff in the building knows their responsibilities in case of an emergency evacuation. Written evacuation plans and diagrams are posted throughout the building. Evacuation plans are practiced monthly.

### Child Guidance Policy

It is the policy and the philosophy of Discover Little Miracles that positive guidance will help children develop self-control and pro-social behavior patterns.

Positive guidance is provided through communication that reflects what the children can do. Communication is clear, concise, open, honest, and reflects a genuine concern for the thoughts and feelings of the children. Consideration is also given to the physical environment to promote positive group interactions. Curriculum activities promote a balance between teacher-directed and child-initiated activities so that children have an opportunity to contribute to their program.

Children will be guided in ways that will enhance self-esteem, self-control, and respect for the rights of others.

Discover Little Miracles prohibits all forms of physical and verbal punishment. This includes, but is not limited to: humiliating, frightening, hitting, spanking, shaking, verbal or sexual abuse. Withholding food, force-feeding and punishment for lapses in toilet training are also prohibited.

Discover Little Miracles uses the 1, 2, 3 Magic philosophies and a time-away policy. This policy entails removing the disruptive child from the group to a designated area within the view of the teacher, and giving the child a quiet activity to do until the child's behavior modifies, allowing them to rejoin the group. The child's undesirable behavior will be discussed with the child, so he/she understands what was undesirable.

When a child's behavior is physically or verbally harmful to him/herself and/or another child, or property, the child will be removed from the group. After a time period, not to exceed 1-minute/per 1 year of age, the child will be given the opportunity to change his/her behavior, and return to the group. However, if the behavior is repeated, the child will be removed from the room, and the Director will notify the parents of the child's persistent disruptive behavior. A conference will be set up, wherein a consistent approach will be established and used both at home and while in care. When the behavior of the child is continually disruptive to other children and detrimental to the daily program, the child will be discharged, upon notification of the parents. This discharge may be for the day, or permanently. No child will be allowed to abuse another child physically or verbally or the teaching staff. No verbal abuse or derogatory remarks will be tolerated. Behavior, such as this, may result in discharge. Upon discharge, referrals will be made to professional agencies for counseling and guidance in re-directing the child's behavior. All possible help will be given to the parents in finding a new, suitable placement for their child.

### Withdrawal

Any parent or guardian who wishes to withdraw their child from the program must notify the Director in writing at least 2 weeks prior to the child's last day of attendance.

Discover Little Miracles reserves the right to remove a child from care if it is determined that the program is not beneficial to the child, or the child exhibits behavior that causes harm to other children, staff, themselves, or property.

Discover Little Miracles maintains an open-door policy. Parents/guardians are welcome and encouraged to visit at any time during operating hours.