Family Handbook

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I. WELCOME TO THE CARING CENTER Back

The Caring Center (TCC) is dedicated to the highest quality childcare and early educational experience possible. We subscribe to a developmental philosophy, based on the theory that children experience several different, sequential stages of emotional, social, physical and cognitive growth. Your child's success in passing from one stage to the next is dependent upon appropriate environmental stimuli and the encouragement of innate abilities. The Caring Center encourages the development of self-confidence, self-esteem, decision-making abilities, cooperation, respect and caring for others and the community at large. We value your input as your child progresses, because you and your child are part of a very special partnership with The Caring Center.

Children need a child-responsive environment, staffed by dedicated and qualified professionals who work together to create a nurturing atmosphere. To ensure consistency of philosophy and performance, we recruit experienced educators with excellent credentials, who must qualify by completing a rigorous in-house orientation program, and then must participate in ongoing professional development and continuing education. Our excellent staff is trained to recognize and present children with those tasks that will best support their growth and development.

TCC values diversity as an important aspect of the learning environment. We seek to counteract stereotyping - which limits children from using their innate abilities – and we take pride in the differences among our staff and among our children.

TCC is licensed as a childcare center by the Pennsylvania Department of Human Services and accredited by the National Association for the Education of Young Children (NAEYC). The Caring Center has earned 4 stars from Keystone STARS (their highest rating). Our curriculum is aligned with The Pennsylvania Early Learning Standards and the Keystone Stars Quality Initiative. The center admits children and hires staff without regard to race, religion, national origin, sex, and age.

II. MISSION STATEMENT Back

The Caring Center is an independent nonprofit organization formed by parents and professional staff to deliver exemplary early childhood education and promote family and community development.

III. PHILOSOPHY STATEMENT Back

It has been said that 60 percent of human intelligence is formed by the time a child is three years old, 90 percent by the age of five. At The Caring Center, our mission is to make the most of this time. Whatever the age group, the same creative thought and interest goes into planning everything we do. Our program is designed to cultivate each stage of a child's intellectual, emotional, social, and physical growth through a rich variety of daily activities, which are planned to meet the Pennsylvania Learning Standards for Early Childhood. Our philosophy is to work within the natural developmental process of children, understanding that the best education begins with a strong foundation and first-hand experience.

We believe that all children are unique. We encourage each child to learn, grow, and develop at their own rate, and we treat each child as an individual. We closely observe every child's progress toward established benchmarks for development, but we adapt our curriculum to fit the needs of children who may require more time to reach a milestone and/or who may need to be challenged beyond our planned curriculum. We expect

that children's language skills will be at different stages, their self-help skills will vary, and their projects and artwork will look different. At The Caring Center, we strive to meet the individual needs of all our children, and foster their continuing development within a group setting.

We believe in educating the whole child. When we plan lessons and activities, we look at their value for developing coordination, conceptual abilities, artistic and language skills, social cooperation, and independence. We encourage our children to work and play cooperatively. We strive to ensure they grow up in an atmosphere of mutual respect and caring. We challenge them to try new things, but never pressure them to do more than they're ready for - because we want our children to have positive learning experiences to build on, and we want them to develop self-esteem and confidence. We help our children develop a love of learning that lasts a lifetime.

We believe that children learn through play. Depending on what stage of development a child is at, their "play" may look very different, but we plan fun and engaging learning activities every day to stimulate their growth. We encourage children to play games, build, pretend and explore. We plan time each day for structured and unstructured play – because through play, children learn social and language skills, enhance their motor skills, build creative expression, and continue to develop their understanding and processing skills.

We believe in building literacy from birth. Literacy is an essential building block for future success, so we read with our children every day, and we encourage and support our families to read with their children every day too. We design our classrooms to be literacy-rich environments, and we infuse our curriculum with literacy-specific instruction - because we know that literacy skills unlock the doors to all sorts of future possibilities, by empowering our children to learn new things and explore new worlds.

IV. THE CARING CENTER'S CORE VALUES Back

- **Kids First** (Putting kids' needs first and doing what's best for kids)
- **Caring** (Respect, kindness and empathy for others, enthusiasm for our work)
- **High Standards** (Setting a high bar for quality; always doing the right thing)
- **Teamwork** (Cooperation with parents, colleagues, community)

V. OUR APPROACH Back

- Provide an individualized, developmentally-appropriate program focused on nurturing the whole child
- Stimulate emotional, intellectual, physical and social growth in a safe environment
- Instill a lifelong love of learning and a sense of community in a multi-cultural environment
- Foster partnership between parents and staff (for the benefit of our children) by creating an atmosphere of mutual respect, communication and understanding
- Support the personal and professional development of staff, and enable them to provide a unique and innovative experience for the children

VI. ENROLLMENT Back

The Caring Center relies on word-of-mouth and referrals to help maintain full enrollment. Our outreach consists of regular engagement with and referrals from our relationships with local universities, the School District of Philadelphia and other childcare centers in our neighborhood.

TCC enrolls new children on a rolling basis (all year long), based on availability. Applications can be completed and submitted online at any time. It is recommended that all potential new Caring Center families register for a tour of the facility. Tours are conducted every other Wednesday morning at 10:00am. For more information, please call 215-386-8245, or email info@thecaringcenter.org.

Children eligible for enrollment at The Caring Center must be at least eight (8) weeks old, as of their first day of enrollment. To enroll in one of The Caring Center's Pre-K classes, children must be at least three (3) years old, on or before their start date. All applications are reviewed by the Executive Director. Slots for childcare are offered based on the center's availability and in the order that each application/application fee was submitted. Waitlist preference is given to siblings of current TCC students / alumni.

The Caring Center is an Equal Opportunity Child Care Provider. Admissions, the provisions of services, and referrals of clients shall be made without regard to race, color, religious creed, disability, ancestry, age, sex, national origin (including limited English proficiency). Program services shall be made accessible to eligible persons with disabilities through the most practical and economically feasible methods available. These methods include, but are not limited to, equipment redesign, the provision of aides, and the use of alternative service delivery locations. Structural modifications shall be considered only as a last resort among available methods.

We assign children to a specific classroom, based on their age, readiness, classroom availability and other factors. Continuity of care is important, so we consider this carefully when assigning their classroom. We strive to place children in a classroom where they can stay for at least 6-9 months, or longer. After a family has been offered placement for their child, several important steps must be taken to secure a spot, and complete enrollment. We cannot guarantee enrollment without a signed contract and a down payment on-file.

ChildCare Works (CCIS) Subsidies Back

We DO accept childcare subsidies from the state's ChildCare Works (CCIS) program for families who are eligible. Program participation is based on financial eligibility, parents' schedule and other factors. Please contact your local ELRC office for more information about eligibility requirements.

If your family has CCIS subsidy coverage, you will be charged a weekly family co-pay, with the amount determined as the higher of either: 1) the amount set by your local ELRC office, based on financial need and eligibility OR 2) The Caring Center's weekly minimum co-pay, whichever amount is *higher*.

Tuition / Co-Pays and Fees Back

Tuition/Co-Pays are charged on a weekly basis. Invoices are sent to parents via email and through the ProCare app, on a regular schedule - either bi-weekly or monthly. Parents must ensure that we have a current, valid email address and phone number for them at all times, and they must be sure to alert us immediately if their email address or phone number changes.

Parents are responsible for payment of tuition/co-pays throughout the time of their Child's enrollment at The Caring Center, even if, for some reason, an invoice is not received. Parents may choose to make tuition/co-pay payments via an automatic bank draft (one-time or automatically recurring), and/or by check, money order, debit card or credit card. No cash payments will be accepted. If payment is made by credit card, a 3% processing fee will be added to the transaction.

We are a year-round program, so children must maintain their enrollment continuously throughout the year in order to maintain a spot in our program (i.e., there are no 'weeks off'). Parents are obligated to pay their regular weekly tuition/co-pay amount, regardless of whether the Child is actually present at the Center during that time. This obligation to pay tuition/co-pays includes, but is not limited to: dates when the Child may be on vacation, days the child is excluded from care due to illness, travel-related or other absences, holidays and the center's professional development days, and days on which the Center is closed for weather-related or other emergencies.

TCC's Board of Directors sets tuition rates each year. New rates are announced in June, and take effect 09/01 for the period that runs from September 1st through August 31st each year. Typically, rates rise ~3-5% per year. Tax documents showing the total amount of childcare expenses a parent paid each year are available to parents on a self-serve basis through the ProCare app.

Annual Registration Fee Back

For each child enrolled at The Caring Center, we charge a $75.00 annual registration fee. The annual registration fee is due August 1st each year, for any child who will be re-enrolling for the next contract year (beginning 9/1). For families with CCIS (ELRC) subsidy coverage, this fee is paid by the ELRC.

Down Payments / Security Deposits Back

A down payment, in the amount of 4 weeks' worth of tuition/co-pays, is due immediately upon enrollment for every child who enrolls at The Caring Center. Half of this amount (2 weeks' worth of tuition/co-pays) is pre-paid tuition/co-pays to cover the first two weeks of your child's enrollment. The other half (2 weeks' worth of tuition/co-pays) is a security deposit, which will be held by The Caring Center in an escrow account until your child leaves the center.

If your family has ELRC subsidy coverage, our required down payment will be 4X the amount of your weekly family co-pay. The weekly family co-pay is determined as the higher of either: 1) the amount set by ELRC, based on financial need and eligibility OR 2) The Caring Center's weekly minimum co-pay, whichever amount is higher.

When your child's enrollment at The Caring Center ends, your security deposit can be refunded to you if all of the following requirements have been met: the child's account is in good standing (i.e., no past due balance), Parent has submitted a written Departure Notice at least eight (8) weeks' prior to the child's last day of attendance, Parent has requested a refund, AND Parent has provided the Center with a correct and current mailing address to which the refund check and/or any subsequent communications can be sent. All of these requirements must be met in order for us to refund the security deposit. After six (6) months from the child's last date of attendance, The Caring Center will consider any unclaimed and/or ineligible security deposit funds to be forfeited.

Alternatively, upon the child's departure, Parents may choose to make a 100% tax-deductible donation of their eligible security deposit funds back to The Caring Center. Unless otherwise requested, donated security deposit funds are used to support our children's literacy initiative. Please contact the Finance office if you would like to donate your security deposit to The Caring Center.

VII. DAILY SCHEDULES AND PROGRAMS Back

Our regular program hours are 8am to 6pm, Monday through Friday. Specific programming / activities will vary according to your child's age and developmental needs. For easy reference, daily schedules are posted in each classroom. Classes are organized by the children's ages, as follows:

Infants (8 weeks – 12 months old)
Infants create their own schedules, and thus the schedule is kept informal. Infants are fed and allowed to sleep 'on-demand'. However, all infants receive periods of stimulation through both planned and spontaneous interaction with staff, other infants, and with age- appropriate materials.

Young Toddlers (12 – 24 months old)
With a staff ratio of one teacher for every five young toddlers, activities are both child-initiated and teacher-directed. This fosters emerging independence, cooperation, socialization and decision-making skills. At this stage, children transition to one nap at a consistent daily time. They master using a sippy cup, and practice honing skills like using a utensil, putting on a coat, etc., as part of their developing 'self-help' skills.

Toddlers (24 months – 3 years old)
Older toddlers have a more structured day. A brief morning circle time is introduced, a scheduled nap time is included, and eventually, use of the toilet is practiced and mastered. A variety of activities that help foster independence, socialization, cooperation, and decision-making skills are offered throughout the day. If a child prefers not to participate in the planned activity, he or she may choose to play with other toys or books or spend time in independent play.

Pre-K1 (~3 – 4 years old)
Our Pre-K1 class is designed to meet the needs of children who are transitioning from being older toddlers to becoming young Pre-K students. Children in this group may or may not be fully potty-trained yet. They are learning to use their developing social skills, and working to master number and letter recognition. Activities tend to concentrate on practical life experiences, sensorial exploration, and receptive/expressive language skills.

Pre-Kindergarten (3 – 5 years old)
Pre-Kindergarten begins at approximately three years of age. At this stage, children have mostly mastered using the toilet, and they are now learning to become a part of a larger group / class. While the program may vary a bit from class to class (depending on the needs of the individual children in each class), all TCC Pre-Kindergarten classes provide a nurturing environmental and synchronized conceptual theme. Activities are presented to develop fine and gross motor skills, pre-writing, pre-reading, language, and positive social and emotional conduct. Since children develop at their own pace, individual programs are developmentally appropriate and are designed to meet their unique needs.

Kindergarten Transition (~5 – 6 years old)
The Kindergarten Transition (KT) Classroom is designed for children who are 5 years old (or almost, just-about 5) and, because of the timing of their birthdate, they've missed entering Kindergarten in September with other children who may be only a month or two older than them. Rather than repeating another year of Pre-K, we use a graduated curriculum to introduce new challenges for our KT class, and support them in doing kindergarten-level work, like writing in our journals and learning to read. Classroom instruction occurs through an investigative, active learning approach, with focused learning centers to foster play and learning.

School-Age Program (5 – 10 years old)
Our School Age program is only for children who are currently enrolled in grades Kindergarten through 4, ages 5-10. The after-school program focuses on enhancing the variety of subjects learned during the school day. We pick the children up from Powel Elementary School at 3:00, and walk back to the center. Children have snack and story time, receive help with their homework, and engage in a wide variety of both child and adult-directed activities.

Cooking, arts and crafts, theater projects, music, sports, computer literacy, and creative writing are included in the program, as well as individual time for homework, writing in journals and/or completing individual projects. Most projects and activities have no time limit; so school-aged children can return to their projects, master activities, and finish things at their leisure after school.

Services are provided from 3-6pm, Monday through Friday. On days when Powel Elementary School is closed, or closes early, School Age children may attend The Caring Center outside of school hours. All meals are included (i.e., a daily after-school snack, as well as morning snack and lunch on days the School Age children are with us for the full day).

VIII. Transition Visits Back

When a new child enrolls with us, we require them to first attend 2-3 transition days, which are short visits on the days prior to the start of their enrollment (usually just the 3 days prior to a child's start date). We don't charge families for these transition days, but we think they are important to help children ease into their new environment.

For infant children, the first transition day is a visit from 10-11am, the 2nd day is a visit from 10am-12 noon, and the 3rd transition day is a visit from 9am -12 noon. For older children (ages 1+), the 3rd transition day is a visit from 9am-3pm (so the children stay with us through the end of nap time). We'll confirm your transition day schedule and your child's official start date once we've received your down payment and enrollment paperwork. We typically schedule transition days to be on the weekdays immediately preceding a child's official start date.

*Please note: a down payment and all required enrollment paperwork must be submitted before a child can attend for their first transition visit.

IX. PROCARE APP Back

ProCare is a one-stop shop - a free app that allows parents to see what their child is doing each day, communicate with teachers, view and pay their bill, receive important notifications and tax documents, etc. Parents are each assigned a unique 4-digit pin number, used to sign their child in and out from the center. This can be done directly through the app on your phone, or using one of our iPads at the front desk.

The email address and phone number associated with each parent's ProCare login are the primary contacts we will use to communicate with you (e.g., to send your bill, to call home if your child is sick, to send emergency updates and important center notices, etc.) - so please keep that information current and up-to-date at all times. We recommend leaving all email and text notifications turned on in the app, so parents don't miss anything that goes on in their child's day.

When communicating with your child's classroom teachers, parents should generally use the Classroom Chat function within the ProCare app. If the matter is urgent, though, we recommend calling the center to talk directly to your child's teacher or an administrator. If the matter is not urgent, but requires more than a few minutes to discuss, and/or if it is a sensitive or confidential matter, you can ask the teacher for their TCC work email address, or schedule a time for a conference - when you can talk with the teacher in a separate, private room.

Communicating with the kitchen, finance office, and/or front desk staff should be done via the "Office Chat" function in the ProCare app. Those staff cannot see messages sent via "Classroom Chat" in ProCare; the reverse is also true – teachers cannot see messages sent to administrators via the "Office Chat". Please call 215-386-8245, or stop by the front desk if you need assistance with the ProCare app or any of its features.

X. YOUR FIRST DAY Back

What an exciting day this is! Upon arrival, please check-in at the front desk in the main lobby. Our staff will welcome you and help you to get started. Using the ProCare app (on your phone, or our tablet), please sign your child in. If needed, please ask for assistance – we are here to help you! Walk your child to their new classroom. Their teachers will have a cubby ready for your child's clothing and extra supplies. A cot or crib will be assigned to your child, as well as a space to store diapers and wipes (for children still using diapers).

Parents of all new children should plan to spend a little extra time on the morning of this first day, to make sure drop-off goes well. Please speak with your child's teacher face-to-face and let them know how your child's night was, and any other information that might be helpful for them to know. Once your child has begun a new activity, or is being cared for by our staff, you may say a casual good-bye, reminding your child that you will return at the end of the day.

Your child's teachers will have carefully read the developmental history you have provided prior to your child's arrival. We welcome any further information you would like your child's teachers to have. It is important you are comfortable while your child is at the center. Feel free to phone the center to inquire about your child's adjustment as often as you deem necessary.

XI. DAILY ROUTINES Back

Parking Back

The parking lot adjacent to the center is designated for parents to drop-off and pick-up their children. Due to the limited number of parking spaces available, use of the center's parking lot is permitted only for dropping-off and picking-up children. In consideration of other families, parents are asked to please limit their time in the parking lot to approximately 10-15 minutes during drop-off and pick-up. Please do not block other vehicles in the parking lot!

Parallel to the building on 31st Street, there is a "Loading Zone" where additional short-term parking is available. Please note: Read the signs RE: parking restrictions - cars parked illegally will be ticketed by the Philadelphia Parking Authority (PPA), and are potentially subject to towing at owner's expense.

Arrival Back

Children typically adjust most quickly when they can arrive before group activities begin (i.e., snack, toileting, circle time). Parents are expected to arrive with their children no later than 9:30 a.m. each day (9:00 for children in our Pre-K program). Arriving by this time gives parents and staff a chance to exchange pleasantries and share news about the child's evening and morning events, as well as ensuring that the child is "in-time" for morning snack, circle time, and all the activities we have planned for the day.

Children who enter late may find themselves feeling rushed and "out of sync" with their classmates. Please be sure to message us in the ProCare app, or call the center to let us know if your child will be absent or arriving late. We will be concerned if we do not see your child by 9:30! If there are any exceptions to their regular schedule (such as a doctor's appointment), please advise us in advance, so we may plan accordingly. It is important for children's development that they have a consistent, regular routine. Getting to school on time is also important practice in preparation for a successful transition to kindergarten.

PLEASE NOTE: Children must arrive by 10:00am each day. Children arriving after 10:00am will not be admitted to attend the center that day, unless they have a doctor's note. Exceptions *may* be made in the case of an important, previously-scheduled appointment (e.g., for an evaluation for services, or physical therapy), only if parents have informed the center at least 24 hours in advance. Refunds will NOT be given for any days a child is denied attendance due to late drop-off by a parent or guardian. Repeated late drop-offs resulting in missed days for the child may be grounds for dismissal from the program, at the discretion of TCC administrators.

When you arrive, please sign your child in at the front desk, or on your phone. Then, you may escort your child directly to his/her class. For the safety of all children**, we ask that you please do not ever leave your child unattended or allow them to run off ahead of you**. Please encourage children to always use their "walking feet" in the hallways, and escort them safely to the classroom, staying with them until they have joined their group and you have checked in with their teacher. If needed, you should always feel free to ask a Caring Center staff person for help (e.g., to stay with your child for a moment while you run back upstairs for a forgotten coat, or to hold your baby while you escort an older sibling to class) – our staff will be happy to help keep children safe in any way we can.

Your child's teacher will greet you warmly when you arrive. Please be sure to speak with him or her for a moment; make sure they have seen your child arrive, and that they've had a chance to greet you and your child. You can update them about your child's morning, any changes to the daily routine, etc. Please be sure to let the teacher know about any changes or new developments they should be aware of that may impact your child, such as: new skills or behaviors your child has demonstrated at home, if your family will be moving soon or having another child, etc.

Departure Back

When constructively involved in an activity, few of us like to be interrupted. Even though your child may be happy to see you, your child might resist leaving his or her friends and activities when you arrive. Younger children may become disoriented and require readjustment time. Please be understanding. We recommend that you warmly greet your child, tell him/her that you will gather his/her belongings, then take a moment to read the information on the Parent Board and/or from their daily log, so that he/she has a few more minutes to play. This allows your child time to prepare to leave. This advance notice will prevent unpleasant struggles at reunion time. When reunited, please remember that you are responsible for your child even when staff

members are visible. This clarification of "who's in charge" is necessary to prevent program disruption and potential child injury, which can occur at transition times when responsibilities get confused.

Remember that The Caring Center closes at 6pm. We allow a 5-minute grace period, but any time a child is picked up after 6:05, a late fee will be assessed. Please call the front desk to let us know if you anticipate being a few minutes late for pick-up, for any reason. If a child has not been picked up by 6:00pm, the Center will phone parents and/or other Authorized Pick-Up Persons (as defined in the Childcare Agreement) to come pick up the child. If necessary, up to 15 minutes will be allowed for families to transition out of the Center at the end of the day, but The Caring Center's facilities must be completely vacated and secured by 6:15pm.

Daily Communications Back

Each classroom maintains records of anecdotal observations, milestones and "special events" that occur during your child's day. Your child has a mailbox where we will place important communications from the staff, artwork your child has completed, monthly classroom newsletters, etc. Each classroom also contains a Parent Bulletin Board where you can find class information, important reminders, and Caring Center news. Teachers and parents can message each other directly through the ProCare app. We also ask that parents take a few moments at the beginning and end of each day to have a brief, face-to-face conversation with their child's teacher. We want to partner with you to foster and support your child's development. Allowing a few minutes each day for conversation with his/her teachers will help us to develop a relationship, ensure we are all aligned on your child's needs and goals for his/her development, and provide opportunities for us to share information with you about your child's day, his/her progress toward goals and milestones, and reminders about center events, upcoming activities, etc.

Cubbies Back

Your child has his/her own cubby to store extra clothing and projects. Please be certain to take projects home on the day that they are placed in the cubby. Your interest in your child's projects will reinforce his or her future efforts.

XII. PROVISIONS Back

The Caring Center will provide*:*

- Infant formula (typically Enfamil and/or Similac -- see kitchen staff for further details)
- Mid-morning and mid-afternoon snacks
- Lunch
- Cups, dishes, utensils
- Age-appropriate toys, games, books and learning materials
- Bibs
- Rest mat/crib
- Strollers

Parents Provide:

- Diapers
- Wipes
- Two (2) extra sets of seasonally-appropriate clothing (please include a light sweater or jacket)
- A sheet for naptime – a fitted, crib-size sheet is used for all ages (Infant through Pre-K)
- A tote bag with handles (to store sheets when it's not nap time)

- A family photo
- Hairbrush or comb (optional)
- Sleeping toy (optional)

Parents *also* provide the following items, by age group:

Infants	Toddlers	Pre-K and Kindergarten Transition
Bottles, nipples	Sippy cup	Toothbrush & Toothpaste
Blanket sleeper	Blanket (child-sized)	Blanket (child-sized)
Breast milk, or preferred formula	Sleeping toy (optional)	
Pacifier (optional)		

*** PLEASE USE PERMANENT MARKER TO LABEL ALL ITEMS WITH YOUR CHILD'S NAME.**
**** WE ARE NOT RESPONSIBLE FOR LOSS OR DAMAGE TO PERSONAL PROPERTY!**

XIII. MEALS AND SNACKS Back

Our kitchen staff takes pride in preparing and offering nutritious meals to the children. The menu is revised throughout the year to reflect seasonal offerings. Sugar, salt, and spice levels are kept at a minimum. All food is prepared fresh daily in-house. Meals are scratch-cooked, using locally-sourced and organic ingredients. A copy of the monthly menu is available to you at the front desk and/or by request. Please let us know if your child has any allergies and/or special dietary restrictions (e.g., lactose or gluten free, allergic to eggs). As needed, we will prepare a separate, nutritionally-appropriate menu option to meet their dietary needs. Questions and suggestions are welcomed – please stop in to talk to a member of the kitchen staff!

Meal Schedules Back

- Mid-morning snack is served at 9:30 a.m.
- Lunch is offered to infants and toddlers at 11:30 a.m. and to Pre-Kindergarten and Kindergarten Transition at 12:00.
- Afternoon snack is served at 3:00 p.m.

Infant Formula & Food Back

Infants' needs vary. We stock the following infant formulas: Similac and Enfamil. Please advise us of your choice, or you may provide your own breastmilk or preferred infant formula (must be clearly labeled). When formula is not packaged in ready-to-feed bottles, we ask that you provide two bottles, each labeled with your child's name. Bottles and nipples must be taken home each day to be thoroughly washed; they should be returned the next day. Please make certain there is always at least one clean, labeled bottle at the center.

When the children are ready to eat purees and finger foods, these will be provided by the center each day. However, we expect parents of infants to introduce new foods at home before they are offered at the center. Before we offer any food to your child, we will need to confirm that he or she has already been introduced to that particular food at home. Please speak with your child's teacher about new foods as you introduce them at home, and be sure to update the sheet in your child's class to indicate which foods they have already been introduced to.

The Caring Center Menu Back

The Caring Center Food Service Department provides a nutritious, well balanced menu for lunch, and morning and afternoon snacks. A variety of food items, as well as broadly based food preferences, guide the selection of foods. Although not all children will like all foods, children are generally more willing to taste and eat new foods when surrounded by peers. The goal of the Food Service Department is to provide food that meets the children's nutritional requirements and expands their selection and acceptance of healthy foods.

Children who have allergies or special diets, or who refuse to eat certain food items, are offered appropriate alternatives. A list of children with food allergies is posted in each classroom and also in the kitchen. Alternative food substitutions consist of plant-based foods, yogurt, cheese / dairy-free cheese, rice, fresh fruit, and Sun Butter-and-jelly sandwiches.

Our afternoon snack is intentionally designed to be more substantial than the morning snack; this helps keep the children from getting hungry before dinner. When a higher fat item is served, the menu items for the rest of the day are kept lower in fat to balance out the day's total fat content. Infants and toddlers are served whole milk; Pre-Kindergarten and Kindergarten Transition children are served 2% milk. Fresh vegetables are served weekly as a snack, usually with a low-fat dip.

We follow a nutritious meal pattern using these guidelines:

Morning Snack: (The children receive 2 of 4 components; only 1 liquid is served.)
1) Milk 2) Grain 3) Fruit/ Vegetable 4) Meat or Alternative

Lunch: (The children receive 1 serving of each.)
1) Milk 2) Grain 3) Fruit/ Vegetable 4) Meat or Alternative
(Our weekly menu usually consists of one chicken, one beef, one fish, one cheese and one of the children's favorite items.)

Afternoon Snack: (The children receive 2 of 4 components; only 1 liquid is served.)
1) Milk 2) Grain 3) Fruit/ Vegetable 4) Meat or Alternative

Child and Adult Care Food Program
Example Meal Pattern for Infant Menus

Ages	Lunch	Snack
Infants Birth through 3 months	4-6 fluid oz. of breast milk or formula*	4-6 fluid oz. of breast milk or formula
Infants 4 months through 7 months	4-8 fluid oz. of breast milk or formula 0-3 tbsps. infant cereal* (optional) 0-3 tbsps. fruit and/or vegetables (optional)	4-8 fluid oz. of breast milk or formula

Infants **8 months through 11 months**	6-8 fluid oz. of breast milk, formula or whole milk 2-4 tbsps. infant cereal* and / or 1-4 tablespoons meat, fish, poultry, egg yolk, or cooked dry bean or peas, or ½ - 2oz cottage cheese 1-4 tbsps. fruit and/ or vegetables	2-4 fluid oz. of breast milk, formula or whole milk 0-1/2 slice bread or 0-2 crackers** (optional)

** Iron-fortified infant formula; Iron-fortified dry infant cereal*
*** Made from whole-grains or enriched meal or flour*

Sample Infant Menu – Fruits and Vegetables

Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday
Applesauce	Apricots	Peaches	Bananas	Pears
Green Beans	Butternut Squash	Peas	Sweet Potatoes	Carrots

Cereals Served
Rice
Oatmeal
Mixed

XIV. SPECIAL PROGRAMS Back

Cooking Classes Back

Pre-Kindergarten classes will participate in cooking classes, led by their teachers and/or our Food Service Staff. Children are given opportunities to follow recipes, prepare nutritionally sound snacks, learn to use basic kitchen tools safely, discuss nutrition, participate in food tasting, learn about food origins, experiment with ingredients, and cooperate in a group. The program is developmentally-appropriate; simple tools and procedures are presented before complex ones.

Yoga and Music Classes Back

The Caring Center brings in qualified special guest instructors for regular programming, such as yoga and music classes. These classes are lots of fun for the children! These activities help enrich and expand the children's experience by teaching and promoting mindfulness, awareness, self-control and self-expression. Caring Center staff are always present when a special instructor works with the children.

Computer Awareness Back

Each of the Pre-Kindergarten and Kindergarten classrooms has access to a computer. Teachers may select appropriate software or programs to reinforce basic concepts and classroom themes and to provide recreational games that supplement those already available in the classroom. The children may have access to

the equipment approximately one time per week. Computer opportunities are offered in accordance with the NAEYC Standards and Environment Rating Scale Criteria.

Evening Programs Back

By 5:00 p.m., Pre-Kindergarten children from different classes may combine (inside or outside) so that they have time to mingle freely with one another. Special materials are provided by the center to continue the children's constructive involvement until their parents arrive.

Trips and Excursions Back

Just as you plan special events and trips for your child, so do we! You introduce your child to his or her immediate neighborhood through frequent walks and outings. We familiarize the children with The Caring Center's surrounding community, through excursions like attending story time at the Durham Public Library and visits to Drexel Gardens.

Trips and excursions are developmentally-appropriate to the age group. They are planned to broaden the children's horizons. Teachers visit the site prior to each trip. Written permission from the parents is required for any trips using vehicular transportation. Transportation is provided by school buses with professional drivers. Parents are encouraged to accompany their children on any outing; teachers are delighted to have an additional chaperone. You may find it a particularly enjoyable day with your young one and his/ her classmates. Please note that all children are required to wear a yellow Caring Center t-shirt when attending any field trip off-site. T-shirts are available for sale at the front desk.

Trips are discussed with the children before they occur, to help prepare them for what they will experience. In order to help build a conceptual foundation, opportunities to play out the trip experience are encouraged through block play, sand, drawing mediums, and story writing. Outings are considered an integral part of the pre-school experience. We regret that we cannot make alternative arrangements for children whose parents, for whatever reason, are not interested in their child's participation. We will be happy to help parents consider other options.

Summer Camp Back

Another special feature of The Caring Center is our exciting Summer Camp program. Summer Camp is offered for school-aged children, who are 5 to 10 years old (as of the start of Summer Camp), and have just completed kindergarten through fourth grade. This ten (10) week program features a wide variety of fun-filled activities for the whole summer, including barbecues and picnics, nature study, arts and crafts, dramatic play, story time, movement and music, and much more. Weekly field trips and visiting entertainers are scheduled throughout the summer. Themes are chosen by our staff each week, and special activities are planned based on these themes. A five-week minimum enrollment is required for participation in our summer camp program.

XV. CHILD DEVELOPMENT and PARENT RESOURCES Back

Children and parents develop at different rates! Most parents will experience occasional problems in their relationships with their children. Children will be more enjoyable to their parents at some times and not at others, depending on both the child's and the parent's temperament. We expect such problems to occur. Based on our experience and expectations, we can offer some important resources to support your parenting. Consulting with your child's teacher is a great advantage; he/she is educated in child development and experienced in working with children. Their years of experience working with children have allowed them to

develop successful strategies for efficiently managing different behaviors. Our teachers are more than happy to share their wisdom.

Parent Support Back

In addition to written communications, teachers are available to listen to and discuss your concerns. Please feel free to approach the teachers and ask them to identify a mutually convenient time for you to meet. You are welcome to visit the center at any time. It is suggested that you call ahead only to make certain that the group is on-site. Our center is a learning environment, not only for children, but also for parents and staff. We expect and welcome your questions.

The Caring Center Parent Information Table Back

The Center's main parent information table and bulletin board, in the reception area, presents some of the current literature on child development, information about resources available to families, upcoming activities and events throughout the area, legislative efforts affecting children and families, and other information that may support parenting. Please also take note of our Recall Board (in the same location) where we will post important product safety information about product recalls that may be relevant to your family.

Parent Resources Back

Lending Library: The classroom staff and the Executive Director have valuable books and periodicals, which they are happy to lend to parents and families, upon request.

Parenting Associations: TCC Administrators routinely post newsletters from Philadelphia area parent resource associations, and information about resources, programs, activities and events for families. They are available to discuss the resources and information shared.

Developmental Specialist: Occasionally, teachers' assessments of children will identify an area of concern about a particular aspect of development. The Director is always informed about this; this process insures there is a "second opinion". As appropriate, parents are then informed and resources are gathered. Parents are referred to a third-party agency which completes a professional observation/evaluation of the child. The agency then recommends additional resources / support, as needed to enhance the child's growth and development. They also may recommend a carefully selected resource person, such as a speech and language therapist, child psychologist, and/or audiologist. The teacher will plan with the parents and any support staff or resource persons to monitor and report the child's progress and ensure that proper intervention occurs.

Parent Resource Table: Flyers, bulletins and information about upcoming events, benefits and available resources are placed on the Parent Resource Table in the lobby of each building. Please help yourself.

Assessments Back

Your child's developmental progress is formally assessed within 45 days of entry into the center and at least every six months thereafter. The assessment will be based on an age-appropriate developmental checklist and daily and weekly anecdotal recordings made by the classroom teachers. From this information, the staff will set goals for your child and individualize when planning classroom activities. Your participation in this process is valued and appreciated.

Conferences Back

Parent-teacher conferences are scheduled twice per year (typically in November and May). The purpose of these meetings is to discuss your child's developmental progress, set mutually-agreeable and realistic goals, get feedback from parents, and cement the relationship between parents and staff. The Head Teacher initiates the scheduling of these conferences. While these conferences are typically held at specific times during the year, you may request a conference at any time during the year.

Transitional Conference Back

Before a child moves to the next developmental age group/leaves for Kindergarten, a parent/teacher conference is scheduled. Typically, children will not be considered for "Move-up" unless they have been in the same classroom for approximately six months or more (a minimum of 6 to 9+ months for infants).

Move-ups and Transition Back

Development occurs at different rates for each child. Moving a child from one program to the next (e.g. Infant to Toddler, Toddler to Pre–K) is determined by the individual child's signs of readiness. These signs are observed and assessed by the Head Teacher and the Administrative team. When a child exhibits behaviors common to the next developmental stage, such as when a toddler has mastered toileting and can tolerate being part of a larger group of children, a new classroom setting may be appropriate. Other factors such as seniority, chronological age and availability of space also influence "Move-ups".

Please recognize that a great deal of time is allocated to proper classroom placement. A mixture of ages, genders, races and cultures, familiar and unfamiliar persons is most desirable. We are mandated to pay close attention to group size and adult/child ratios. The center reserves the right to change classroom assignments when deemed necessary by the center, for whatever reason, including attrition or demographic shifts within the center.

The Executive Director will notify parents in-writing when their child is identified as ready to "Move-up". We typically transition children to a new class over a period of one week, where children go for progressively longer visits to the new classroom, with a familiar staff member and classmates. They spend an increasing amount of time in the new class each day as they adjust to the new setting.

From a parent perspective, the Move-Up process consists of three main components: completion of an updated Developmental History for your child, an exit conference with the current classroom teacher, and an introductory meeting with the new teacher in your child's new classroom.

XVI. CONFIDENTIALITY Back

Parent's/Guardian's rights regarding the confidentiality of children's records are ensured. Parents/Guardians have the right to inspect their children's records upon request. Copies of these records will not be shared with anyone outside of The Caring Center without the parent's express prior permission. Individual children's records / information will only be shared with Caring Center employees on an as-needed basis, with authorized government officials (as in the case of our annual state inspection), and/or with therapists or special instructors / consultants (with prior written approval from the child's parents). We are committed to maintaining the privacy and trust of every family in our care.

XVII. BOARD OF DIRECTORS Back

Formerly known as The ISI Caring Center for Children and Parents (established 1982), The Caring Center was re-formed as a non-profit organization in 1991 by parents and staff who were committed to continuing the tradition of quality childcare established at The ISI Caring Center. The high quality of The Caring Center's programs is overseen by a Board of Directors, comprised of parents, staff and members of the community. Officer positions of President, Vice President, Treasurer and Secretary of the corporation are elected by the Board annually.

XVIII. HEALTH POLICIES Back

Young children are prone to frequent colds and other illnesses. It is not always possible for providers or parents to know when these issues are communicable. Classroom staff, in consultation with the Executive Director and/or Center Director, must consider whether the child's physical and emotional symptoms require temporary exclusion from the program. This decision involves careful evaluation of the comfort and health of the individual child, the classroom routine, and the needs of the other children in the group. Your child might be temporarily excluded from The Caring Center for any of the following reasons:

- Increasing the chances of other children and staff becoming ill
- Sick children are more comfortable when they are not in group care
- Inadequate attention paid to well children by staff preoccupied with sick child
- The child will not get well as quickly as he/she would in a more isolated, quiet, home atmosphere

If we call you to pick-up your child, please plan to arrive within an hour. For supervision reasons, the child will remain in the classroom and be made comfortable until he or she is picked up. Illnesses requiring a doctor's note for readmission include, but are not limited to: hepatitis, scabies, pinworm, scarlet fever and strep throat. Should your child become ill while at home, please inform the classroom teacher/receptionist as soon as possible. This will enable us to alert other parents to watch for similar symptoms.

If your child is hospitalized, it is essential that the center be notified. Our policies have been developed in consultation with medical staff at Children's Hospital of Philadelphia and Temple University; they are based on identified industry best practices and a thorough review of the most recent literature on childhood illness. In an effort to protect all of our children, we rely on our consultant's assistance when reports of contagious diseases are received. The following criteria will help you determine whether your child is well enough to attend the program.

Physical Examinations and Immunizations Back

Depending on the age of your child, within certain timeframes, the Department of Public Welfare requires regular medical examinations for your child. We will remind parents when an updated health appraisal is required. ***Please Note:*** **Noncompliance with this policy can result in termination of enrollment.** It is imperative that your child receive regular physical examinations and all necessary immunizations. However, no child shall be required to have any such immunization if parents object thereto, in writing, on the grounds that it conflicts with their sincere religious beliefs or if the child's physician, nurse practitioner, or physician assistant submits documentation that such a procedure is contraindicated.

For any child who is under-immunized, either because of a medical condition (documented by a licensed health care professional) or the family's religious beliefs, the Center will exclude that child from care if a vaccine-preventable disease to which the child is susceptible (due to their own under-immunization) occurs within the program. Parents of any under-immunized child agree, for the safety of their child, to adhere to any

exclusion plan developed by the center's staff, including the timeline for exclusion from care and/or the terms for being allowed to return to school.

Medications Back

Prescription medication can be administered at the center *only if*:

- It is provided in its **original** container, with a prescription indicating the appropriate use, dosage and frequency (number of times per day) and the child's name.
- It is not expired
- It is accompanied by a "Permission to Administer Medication" form, dated and signed by the parent.

Non-prescription medication must be unexpired and it must be accompanied by a "Permission to Administer Medication" form, dated and signed by the parent. Upon arrival to the center, please request the appropriate form from the receptionist. Medication and forms are collected at the front desk. In order to be certain that medications are not accessible to the children, they are stored at the front desk or in the medication refrigerator.

***** Important Note**

Many cough/cold medicines should never be administered to infants and only rarely to young children. The center requires a note from a pediatrician to administer any over-the-counter cough/ cold medication to children less than two years of age. If parents provide multiple medicines/treatments to be administered by Caring Center staff, please note that the center's staff will only administer one over-the-counter cough/cold preparation in addition to Tylenol/Motrin. Caring Center staff will not administer medications to children if the medication has expired. Caring Center staff will review the prescription and instructions listed on all medications before administering them to children, and Caring Center staff will only administer (unexpired) medications in accordance with the instructions listed on the medication.

XIX. MEDICAL CONDITIONS AND EXCLUSION OF CARE Back

The Caring Center's Exclusion Policy Back

Children should be excluded from care when they have an illness that may be transmitted to other children (i.e., are contagious) and/or when their own health would be improved by spending time away from a group care setting. Children should be excluded from care whenever they have a temperature greater than or equal to 100.4 degrees Fahrenheit.

Children who have / have had a fever may not return to the center until they have been fever-free (without the use of fever-reducing medications) for at least 24 hours. If a child is sent home from school they must stay home for the rest of that day, plus the next 24 hours after that (e.g., the whole next school day) before they may return to school.

If a child is absent from care for 3 or more consecutive days without prior notice (i.e., an 'unplanned absence'), we will require a doctor's note before the child is allowed to return to the center.

Please see below for a list of common childhood illnesses and center policies specific to those illnesses. Since every situation is different, the final decision to exclude a child from care for any type of illness will be made at the discretion of TCC's administrators. Parents may be called and asked to pick up a sick child at the sole

discretion of the Executive Director or Education Director. Also, at the sole discretion of the Executive Director or Education Director, a doctor's note may be required before a sick child is allowed to return to school.

Chickenpox Back

- Symptoms:
  - Characterized by blister-like pimples over entire body
- Transmitted through direct contact with rash and airborne particles
- Period between exposure and onset of rash is usually two weeks
- Children are contagious for 1-2 days before rash appears and for 5 days afterwards

Exclusion Policy: Children with chicken pox should be excluded for 6 days after rash appears, or when lesions are crusted or dry. Pregnant personnel should have serologic determination of immune status and receive VZIG if indicated.

Colds / Upper Respiratory Infections Back

- Symptoms:
  - Persistent cough
  - Persistent runny nose and/or congestion

Exclusion Policy: Child may need to be examined by a doctor and is likely to need to rest at home before returning to the center. If a child is sent home from school because of their illness, they may return after 24 hours if symptoms have improved.

Conjunctivitis (Pink Eye) Back

- Symptoms:
  - Inflammation and redness of eye(s)
  - Oozing white or yellow crust that forms around the eye(s) and eyelashes (especially after sleep/nap)
- Infectious while child has purulent eyes

Exclusion Policy: The child must see a doctor, and must remain at home for at least 24 hours after beginning treatment (e.g., prescription eye drops).

COVID Back

- Symptoms:
  - Fever
  - Cough
  - Shortness of breath / Congestion
  - Headache
  - Fatigue / Tiredness
  - New loss of sense of smell and/or taste
  - Sore Throat
  - Chills, Muscle pain
  - Nausea / vomiting, diarrhea

Exclusion Policy: Child must be excluded from care until they have been fever-free for 24+ hours without any fever-reducing medicine, and their other symptoms have significantly improved (e.g., cough, runny nose have subsided).

Diarrhea Back

- Loose, watery stools. Occurring at twice (or more) the child's normal daily frequency

- May sometimes be caused by medication, teething and/or dietary changes

If the child has no other symptoms, we may allow them to enter/remain at the center. However, when accompanied by any of the following additional symptoms, diarrhea is likely a sign of a contagious gastrointestinal infection, and exclusion from childcare is necessary:

- Fever of 100.4 or higher
- Red, watery eyes
- Sporadic listlessness, lethargy
- Refusal to eat / loss of appetite
- Negative change in behavior

Exclusion Policy: Children with diarrhea plus one or more of the additional symptoms listed above cannot re-enter the center until their stools return to normal, and they have been free of diarrhea for at least 24 hours.

Ear Infections Back

- Usually occurs as a complication of a cold

Exclusion Policy: Child must be excluded from care for at least 24 hours after beginning an antibiotic treatment. If the child has been on antibiotics for 24+ hours, and does not have a fever, they may return to the center but should continue using medication as prescribed.

Fever Back

- **A temperature of greater than or equal to 100.4 degrees Fahrenheit**
  The American Academy of Pediatrics (AAP) considers a body temperature of 100.4°F (38°C) or higher as a fever, regardless of the measurement method (rectal, oral, or axillary).

  At The Caring Center, children's temperatures are taken using the axillary (under-the-arm) method. When using the axillary method, 1 degree of temperature is added to the digital reading on the thermometer to get the most precise body temperature (whereas temperatures taken rectally reflect the actual internal body temperature, the axillary approach relies on a temperature reading taking externally) (e.g., if the thermometer reads "100" using the axillary method, 1 degree is added, yielding an *actual* body temperature of "101").

Exclusion Policy:

Infants less than 4 months:

- Parent to pick up immediately
- Center staff administer Tylenol/Motrin or other antipyretic as soon as possible, with parent consent

Children 4 months to 10 years old:

- Parent contacted by phone; Child must be picked up by parent/guardian within one hour
- Tylenol/Motrin may be given with written consent of parent and in accordance with product instructions, and pediatrician's written instructions (if applicable)

***Before returning to school, all children must be fever-free for at least 24 hours (without the use of any fever-reducing medications)**

Flu (Influenza) Back

- Symptoms:
  - Fever
  - Cough
  - Muscle pain / body aches
  - Congestion

- Chills
- Headache
- Fatigue / Tiredness
- Sore Throat
- Nausea / vomiting, diarrhea

Exclusion Policy: Child must be excluded from care until they have been fever-free for 24+ hours without any fever-reducing medicine, and their other symptoms have significantly improved (e.g., cough, runny nose have subsided).

Hand, Foot & Mouth Disease Back

Hand-foot-and-mouth disease is common among young children and is typically caused by a cocksackie virus. It may cause all of the following signs and symptoms, or just some of them:

- Fever
- Sore throat
- Loss of appetite
- A painful, blister-like red rash, without itching
  - especially tends to appear on the mouth, tongue, palms of the hand, fingers, soles of the feet and sometimes the buttocks
- Irritability
- General feeling of being unwell (malaise)

Exclusion Policy: Children should be kept at home until they have been fever-free for at least 24 hours. Children should also be kept at home if they have any open blisters/sores on their hands and/or in their mouths, because the open sores could contribute to the continued spread of infection to others. Children with blistering Hand, foot & Mouth rash will be required to stay home until their blisters have dried up / scabbed over.

Head Lice (Pediculosis) Back

- Common among school children
- Transmitted through direct contact with infested person or their personal belongings, especially clothing and headgear
- Treatment is very time consuming: we urge every family to institute their own schedule of head checks at home

Exclusion Policy: After treatment has been provided, we must be certain that the child is free of nits before allowing him/her to return to the center. We will definitely be checking! The center will provide a booklet to aid in your prevention program.

Hepatitis A (Stomach Bug) Back

- A virus of the liver that is found in the stool of infected people
- Infants and young children often do NOT present with any symptoms
- Virus can be shed in stool for up to 6 months
- Symptoms include:
  - fever
  - fatigue
  - loss of appetite
  - abdominal pain
  - jaundice

Exclusion Policy: Child must be excluded from care for 14 days the from onset of the illness, OR 7 days from the onset of jaundice, whichever is *longer*.

Impetigo Back

- Characterized by red, cracking oozing blisters; looks like pimples
- Usually itchy; scratching causes it to spread from site to site

Exclusion Policy: Upon identification of rash, child should begin treatment immediately and must be kept at home for 24 hours after the beginning of treatment.

Measles Back

- Caused by a virus; transmitted through airborne particles and infectious droplets
- Once child is exposed, there is a period of 8 –12 days before onset of symptoms
- Child is contagious 3-5 days before rash and 4 days after rash
- Symptoms include:
    - bad cough
    - nasal congestion
    - pink eye
    - white patches in mouth
    - red blotchy rash on body

Exclusion Policy: Child should be excluded for at least 6 days after onset of rash. Once a case of measles is confirmed, all children and staff in the center 6 months and older should be vaccinated or revaccinated within 72 hours of exposure; siblings of any children exposed to measles should be vaccinated as well. Children and non-immune staff who have not received the vaccine can be required to stay home for 21 days from their last date of exposure. Any personnel born after 1957 who do not have proof of immunity should be revaccinated.

Mouth Cold Sore Back

- Infectious in beginning stages while they are draining.

Exclusion Policy: Child must stay at home until sores are dried.

Pinworm Back

- Small threadlike worms that live in the large intestine
- Symptoms:
    - Intense itchiness around the anus and vagina, especially at night
    - Sleeplessness
    - Irritability

Exclusion Policy: Child may return to care 24 hours after first treatment (oral medication)

Rashes Back

Exclusion Policy: A child with a rash but no fever and no other symptoms will be monitored closely at the center. If the rash is persistent (i.e., lasts for more than a few days), the child may be excluded from care until a doctor's note is provided indicating that the child has been seen, the rash has been diagnosed and the child may safely return to school. A child with a rash accompanied by a temperature of 101 or more will be sent home (see fever). In general, the child may return to school with a doctor's note, once they have been fever-free for 24+ hours without the use of fever-reducing medication.

Respiratory syncytial virus (RSV) Back

- Symptoms (usually appear at different times, not all at once):
    - Coughing
    - Sneezing
    - Runny nose
    - Fever
    - Wheezing / Difficulty breathing
- In young infants, symptoms may include irritability, decreased activity, decreased appetite, shallow breathing, and apnea (pauses in breathing that may last more than 10 seconds).

Exclusion Policy: Child must be excluded from care until they have been fever-free for 24+ hours without any fever-reducing medicine, and their symptoms have significantly improved. Should be evaluated by a healthcare provider before returning to childcare.

Ringworm Back

- Caused by a fungus
- Characterized by a round, scaly flat rash with a raised border

Exclusion Policy: Parent of child with suspected ringworm will be contacted by phone and given option of picking up the child on same day and beginning treatment immediately, or allowing child to remain until the end of that day, with the understanding that the child will not attend the center the following day under any circumstances. Child will be readmitted to the center only with a note from the doctor and/or proof of appropriate therapy (Clotrimazole cream).

Roseola Back

- Most common in children ages 6-24 months
- Characterized by high fever for 3 days followed by red raised rash over entire body
- Most contagious periods precedes onset of rash

Exclusion Policy: No exclusion if child is without fever.

Scabies Back

- Microscopic insects (mites) that burrow and lay eggs under the upper layers of skin
- Symptoms include:
    - Pimple-like rash
    - Intense itching, especially at night
    - Tiny burrows that look like grayish-white lines on the skin

Exclusion policy: Child must be excluded from care for 24 hours after first treatment (an oral anti-parasitic)

Scarlet Fever Back

- Caused by bacteria
- Characterized by sandpaper–like fine red rash on face, trunk and extremities
- Many children complain of sore throat, itching, abdominal pain and fever

Exclusion Policy: Child must be excluded from care for at least 24 hours after beginning of treatment. A doctor's note is required to return to the center.

Strep Throat Back

- Infection caused by a highly contagious bacterial infection
- Symptoms:
    - Throat pain that usually comes on quickly

- Red and swollen tonsils, sometimes with white patches or streaks of pus
- Pain when eating and/or swallowing
- Tiny red spots at the back of the roof of the mouth (soft or hard palate)
- Headache
- Fever
- Swollen, tender lymph nodes in the neck
- Rash
- Nausea or vomiting, especially in younger children
- Body aches

Exclusion Policy: Child must be excluded from care for at least 24 hours after beginning use of a prescribed treatment (antibiotic medication), AND may not return until they have been fever-free for 24+ hours without the use of fever-reducing medication. A doctor's note is required to return to the center.

Vomiting Back

Exclusion Policy: Child must be excluded from care for at least 24 hours. They may return once there has been no vomiting and/or diarrhea for at least 24 hours.

XX. EMERGENCY PROCEDURES Back

Emergency Medical Care Back

In case of an emergency, The Caring Center will contact emergency services to transport your child to Children's Hospital. We will call you immediately so you can meet your child and a staff member at the hospital to authorize emergency care**. It is the parent(s)' responsibility to keep their home, business and emergency contact numbers up-to-date and current, so we can reach you in case of an emergency.**

Emergency Plan Back

Your child's safety is always our main concern. Emphasis is placed on ensuring the well-being and protection of all our children, at all times. A copy of The Caring Center's Emergency Plan / Procedures is kept at the front desk. The Emergency Plan / Procedures is shared with all new staff at orientation, and then reviewed annually with all Caring Center staff. All staff receive regular training in First Aid, CPR and Fire Safety.

Fire Drills Back

Fire drills are conducted every 30-60 days, in accordance with state regulations. Drills are recorded on a log sheet for review.

Evacuation Back

In the event that we ever need to evacuate the center, we will walk or transport the children to 35th Street and Haverford Ave (in the former West Philadelphia Childcare Center building). In the event that an alternate evacuation site is required, we would evacuate to Powel Elementary School, or if needed, to the Metropolitan Community Church. Parents will be notified as soon as possible via the ProCare app and/or a phone call if an evacuation of the center is required.

Shelter-in-Place Back

The Shelter-In-Place plan will be immediately implemented if necessary. The center is prepared with a 3-day supply of water and non-perishable food in case of such emergencies. Each classroom has blankets, flashlights and battery-operated emergency radios. We remain committed to maintaining the safety and well-being of our children and staff at all times.

Shelter-In-Place may be implemented if any of the following occur:

- Unusual odors
- Skin or eye irritations
- Visible smoke, fire, or vapor clouds (outside the building)
- Gunfire
- Airway or breathing difficulties
- Outside safety hazards reported by the police

The main objective is to move children and staff to designated safe locations that will protect them until the disaster is over. In the event the Shelter-in-Place plan must be implemented, the following are general practices:

- If the children are outside, bring them inside
- Shut all windows, blinds, and doors
- Turn off heating and cooling ventilation systems
- Stay calm
- Director or designee will call 9-1-1
- Listen very carefully to designated staff directions
- Move away from windows and doors
- Take a battery-operated radio to each designated shelter room; have the radio set to KYW 1060 (local news station)
- Take a flashlight to each designated shelter room
- No one is to enter the building
- If you smell gas, get away from the smell

Natural Disaster Back

During a natural disaster (e.g. hurricane, tornado) appropriate action will be taken to ensure the safety of children and staff. In the event of an occurrence, children will be taken to the closet neighborhood fall-out shelter.

Terrorism Back

In the event of a terroristic threat or action, every effort will be made to contact parents as soon as possible. Cooperative decision making and common sense between center staff and parents will predicate the response to the situation. Parents must be sure to provide the Center with up-to-date, accurate emergency contact information, including cell phone numbers, so they can be contacted in the event of an emergency.

All staff participate in annual emergency preparedness training. (Refer to the Emergency Plan/Procedures binder located at the front desk)

XXI. THE CARING CENTER'S POLICIES & PROTOCOLS Back

Participation in Group Childcare Back

Maximizing Growth and Development

Children's potential for growth and development is maximized through participation in a high-quality early education program. The development of relationships with teachers and peers, along with consistent learning experiences that build on each other from day-to-day, come from regular attendance in an early learning setting.

Admissions and Special Needs Disclosure

The Caring Center's educational program is designed to serve children who are able to function in a group setting. Parents must disclose any special needs or challenges their Child may experience, in order to determine the Child's ability to successfully participate in the center's programs.

Safety Considerations

The Center is committed to maintaining a safe and supportive environment for all children. If, in the Center's professional judgment, either the child and/or the center is unable to ensure the safe operation of the Center, its staff and/or other children, and/or for the child's own safety, the Center reserves the right to decline enrollment or request the withdrawal of an enrolled child. This may occur if the safety of the child or the overall functioning of the program is at risk. In the event of required withdrawal, the Center will continue the child's enrollment for a period of at least two (2) weeks from the date of written notification that withdrawal is required. Instances such as this are rare, but sometimes necessary. Our goal is to provide a safe, nurturing environment where every child can thrive.

Attendance Back

Children enrolled at The Caring Center are expected to adhere to The Caring Center's attendance policy. When a child is absent, the following procedure must be followed: 1) Parent/guardian must call the office or send us a ProCare message to report a child's absence by 9:00am each morning that the child will be absent. 2) In the case of an extended, unplanned absence of three (3) or more consecutive days, or an accumulation of ten (10) or more days of unplanned absences during the school year, parents will be asked to provide a written excuse from a physician, physician's assistant or nurse practitioner.

Late Drop-offs Back

Late drop-offs can present a significant disruption to the daily routines of the child and their class, and they may result in the child missing planned activities, meals, and/or special events. As a result, except when there is a specific and necessary purpose for a late arrival (e.g., a doctor's appointment), children are expected to arrive by 9:30 each morning. Children in our Pre-K classes are expected to arrive no later than 9:00 each morning, since they are practicing / preparing to follow a kindergarten schedule. Parents must call the office or send a ProCare message before 9:00am to report if their child will be arriving late for some reason.

Children will NOT be admitted to attend the center for that day if they arrive after 10:00am, unless the parent presents a doctor's note (from that morning). It is the responsibility of the parent(s) to ensure they bring their child to school on-time.

Absences Back

If a child has multiple unexpected / unplanned absences, Caring Center staff may try to directly contact the parent(s) or guardian(s), to ensure the child's well-being. After 3 consecutive unplanned absences (on days a

child was scheduled to attend), the Center will require a doctor's note before the child can return to the center. (i.e., The child will not be admitted on Day 4 without a doctor's note)

Acceptable reasons for excused absences include absences due to illness, religious holidays, health care appointments that cannot be made during other hours, planned educational excursions, and/or family emergencies. Excuses for extended, unplanned absences (such as a prolonged illness) must be provided in writing and signed by a parent.

Spaces in our program are limited, and they are reserved for children / families who choose to participate in our program as it is structured. Consistently late arrivals, late pickups, and/or unplanned and unexcused absences that total more than 10 days over the course of the school year could be grounds for removing a child from our program and offering their spot to another family who can adhere to the center's attendance policies.

Schedule / Schedule Changes Back

The Caring Center's regular program hours are 8:00am-6:00pm, Monday through Friday. We offer options for two (2), three (3), or five (5) full days per week of care (dependent upon availability). Parents of enrolled children may request to change the number and/or the scheduled days of their child's enrollment by submitting a Schedule Change Request form (at the front desk). Schedule change requests must be for a period of at least four (4) weeks or more (i.e., day-by-day or week-by-week schedule change requests cannot be considered). Availability is not guaranteed. TCC administrators (only) will have final discretion to approve or deny schedule change requests, based on availability, staffing and/or for other factors.

Nutrition - Our Health and Wellness Commitment Back

The Caring Center is committed to maintaining an environment which helps our children grow up healthy and strong. We provide nutritious, well-balanced meals and snacks, and we support positive mealtime experiences, including trying new foods and socializing with friends. Our teachers and staff regularly incorporate nutrition education in their weekly lesson plans and use "teachable moments" to discuss and encourage healthy eating.

Dietary Needs and Preferences Back

Our Food Services team strives to provide fresh, healthy meals that meet the children's nutritional needs and present a variety of foods and flavors. We encourage healthy choices and trying new foods.

We also make accommodations for children with special dietary needs and/or food allergies by offering appropriate alternatives with each meal. Yogurt, cheese, rice, fresh fruit, plant-based meat substitutes, soy milk, oat milk, and Sun Butter-and-jelly sandwiches are some examples of typical substitutions made to accommodate children's individual dietary needs. A list of food allergies is posted in the kitchen and in each classroom.

Physical Activity Back

The Caring Center understands that children need regular physical activity to develop healthy bodies, motor skills and social skills. Our program is committed to providing children with opportunities to move throughout the day. Because of this, students are expected to come to school each day wearing shoes and clothing that allows for their comfortable, active participation in both indoor and outdoor play with other children.

Our teachers and caregivers will implement and promote developmentally appropriate physical activity as a routine part of our daily activities.

The Caring Center believes that physical activity is necessary for every child. Physical activity is not withheld or restricted as part of discipline or behavior management.

Daily Active Play Back

Children from infancy to age 6 are continuously developing and practicing motor and movement skills that are appropriate for their age and developmental stage. Our teachers assess each child's needs and encourage motor skills development accordingly. The Caring Center has developed a schedule for daily active play, based on the recommendations of the American Academy of Pediatrics:

- Infants *(6 weeks to 12 months)*
  Tummy time is encouraged for 3-5 minutes, twice daily while the infant is awake. Recommended outdoor play 2-3 times daily (weather-permitting)
- Toddlers *(13 months - 36 months)*
  Structured indoor play for 2-3 hours, with at least 30 minutes of active movement. Recommended outdoor playtime of at least 60-90 minutes per day (weather-permitting)
- Pre-Kindergarten and Kindergarten Transition *(3 to 5 years old)*
  Structured indoor play for 3-4 hours, with at least 60 minutes of active movement. Recommended outdoor playtime of at least 90-120 minutes per day (weather-permitting)

Weather-Permitting Guidelines for Outdoor Play Back

The Caring Center follows the Department of Human Services (DHS) regulations, which requires children to go outdoors every day, weather permitting. Please dress your child accordingly for the daily weather conditions. NO open-toed shoes should be worn, as these are not safe for active / outdoor play.

Seasonal attire guidelines:

- Winter: Heavy coat, mittens, winter hat, scarf, boots, sneakers
- Spring: Light jacket/hoodie, raincoat/boots
- Summer: Sunscreen, t-shirt, shorts, bug spray, sneakers, sunhat
- Fall: Hoodie/light jacket, raincoats/boots

We follow these specific outdoor play rules:

- *Cold Temp.*: Kids may NOT go outside to play if the temperature or the wind chill is below 25°F.
- *Hot Temp*: Kids may NOT go outside to play if the temperature or the heat index is above 90°F.
- *Precipitation*: Outdoor play during active precipitation (rain, snow, hail, etc.) is NOT permitted.
- *Thunder and Lightning:* Play outside is NOT permitted if any lightning has been observed and/or any thunder has been heard within the past 30 minutes. If thunder and/or lightning are observed while the children are outside, teachers will immediately cease outdoor play, for a minimum of 30 minutes, and bring all children to shelter indoors.
- *Air Quality Alert:* Kids may NOT go outside to play during an active air quality alert of code orange, red, or purple (i.e., AQI of 101+)

Access to Fresh Water Back

Fresh, potable water will be made available and accessible to all children and employees of The Caring Center, at all times. TCC maintains a three-day supply of fresh, potable water on-hand, to be used in case of emergency, loss of water, and/or contamination of city water supply.

Parent/Guardian Participation Back

The center welcomes Parents/Guardians to attend excursions, to visit during class time, to share talents with the center, and/or to help with various projects that benefit their child's classroom or the center's overall programming.

Non-English-Speaking Families Back

The Caring Center typically provides information to families in English; however, we can provide information in the family's native language. A request for a translator should be made during enrollment.

Jewelry / Accessories Back

Hair beads, barrettes, jewelry, etc. should not be worn by children. These accessories are considered to be a safety hazard. When choosing accessories for your child, please be mindful of the potential safety issues they present, not only for your child, but other children as well. If center staff determines that a child's jewelry or accessories may present a safety issue, the items will be removed to keep the children safe, and then these items will be given back to the parent at pick up time.

Toys from Home and Candy Back

To maintain a positive and focused environment, it is recommended that children do not bring toys from home, except for those necessary to make rest time more comfortable and/or those specifically requested by staff (e.g., for "Show-and-Tell"). Toys brought from home can be distracting to both the child and the overall program, and they may become lost or broken, or lead to conflicts between children. The Caring Center is not responsible for any damages or loss to toys or other personal items a child brings to the center.

Toy guns / toy weapons are NOT permitted at the center at any time. These items can create disruptions, and they are not aligned with the safe, healthy, and nurturing environment we strive to maintain for all children. We encourage families to help us support this policy, to ensure a smooth and enjoyable experience for everyone.

Birthdays Back

Birthdays are happy and important occasions for our children to celebrate. Each child deserves to be recognized in a special way on his/her birthday. We are concerned, however, that some birthday celebrations can become too elaborate and sometimes competitive in nature. To promote simple, special, controlled, and uniform birthday celebrations, we ask all parents to adhere to the following guidelines:

- **All birthday celebrations should be arranged with the Head Teacher in your child's class at least two weeks before the child's birthday.** Teachers will work with parents to schedule a date, resolving any conflicts over multiple birthdays, or birthdays that may fall on a holiday or weekend, etc.
- **Outside food is NOT permitted** (i.e., parents may not bring in pizza or ice cream or home-made treats).
- **Upon request, TCC will provide treats for your child's birthday celebration.** After speaking with your child's teacher, please stop by the Front Desk to request a Cupcake Order Form. For us to honor your request, this form must be submitted at least (2) weeks before the date of your child's birthday celebration.

- We will provide cupcakes for your child's celebration, for all the children in their class. OR, we will provide a suitable alternative (e.g., fruit cup) for any child(ren) who may have allergies and/or special dietary needs.
    - **There are two cupcake options:**
        - FREE (i.e., $0): TCC can provide a "school safe" (allergen-free) mini-cupcake for each child in the class (or a suitable alternative for any child's dietary needs / restrictions). **There is no cost for this option.*
        - $1 per cupcake: TCC can provide a fresh-baked, regular (full-size) cupcake for each child in the class (or a suitable alternative for any child's dietary needs / restrictions). **There is a charge for this option: $1 X the number of children enrolled in your child's class. Cupcakes must be ordered in batches of 6 (i.e., you can order 6, 12, 18, 24 cupcakes) Payment is due at the time the request is submitted.*
- Birthday celebrations are scheduled during afternoon snack, after the end of nap time. The whole class will sing and share a treat together in honor of your child's special day! Parents are invited to join us for this brief celebration (~15 minutes), if their schedules allow (please speak to your child's teacher).
- Please Note: NO balloons, hats, party favors, gift bags, outside food, and/or candy may be brought into the center or provided to classmates.
- Outside personalities such as clowns, gorilla-grams, balloon bouquets, etc., are NOT permitted. This can be stressful for young children.

In lieu of party favors or guest personalities, we encourage the tradition of the birthday child donating a "Birthday Book" to his/her classroom. This tradition promotes the importance of reading and sharing, while enhancing the number of classroom books available to the children. The book can be unwrapped and inscribed by the birthday child and donated ceremoniously to the class. The birthday celebration can then focus on sharing and reading the birthday book. (Head Teachers should be consulted about books that are appropriate for the class). Birthdays will always be a special occasion for our children, and we strive to foster a meaningful, yet simple, celebration, in a loving and caring environment that will best serve everyone.

Holidays Back

Holidays reflect important facets of each family's life. Given the vast diversity of backgrounds represented within The Caring Center family, we celebrate the fact that many different cultures are represented here. In presenting special days, we recognize that children can best appreciate the obvious concrete aspects of the holiday (e.g. changes in their environment), rather than the more subtle abstractions (e.g. the religious significance). Thus our observances of holidays will include discussions, display and use of symbols, and activities associated with each day (when national) or each holiday season (where religious). Holidays include, but are not limited to: New Year's Day, Presidents' Day, Martin Luther King Day, Independence Day, Thanksgiving, Lunar New Year and Halloween. Christmas, Chanukah and Kwanzaa are observed with special winter activities; Easter and Passover are recognized with spring celebrations. Please feel free to share information and/or any concerns you may have with the staff.

Special Events Back

The Caring Center Staff, Parents, and Board schedule special events and activities throughout the year to bridge the relationships between home and school. These events are a wonderful way to share family customs. They may include but are not limited to:

- Back to School Night (each classroom has its own event)

- Social Hour (monthly center-wide event for families and children)
- Annual Thanksgiving Luncheon (for families and friends of The Caring Center)
- Book Fair and Read-a-Loud (literacy events)
- Guest Readers and special events for Week of the Young Child
- Grandparent/Special Friend Day
- End of the School Year Barbecue
- Family Night at a local Museum or Play Area

Television / Limited Screen Time Back

Television is a passive and indirect teaching medium; therefore, it is not used on a regular basis. On occasion, staff may choose to show an age-appropriate video which aligns with our curriculum. The video is no more than 30 minutes long, is pre-viewed by the teacher in advance, and is intended to support the children's learning and/or understanding of a concept(s) currently being taught.

The Caring Center encourages children's healthy development by limiting the use of screens in the following manner (in accordance with NAEYC guidelines):

- Infants to 2 years old: Screen usage is not permitted.
- Children ages 2 years+: Screen usage is limited to a max. of 30 minutes per week, and only for an educational or physical activity.
- Meals/Snacks: Screen usage during meal or snack time is not permitted.
- Computer Time: Children ages 3+ may be allowed up to 15 minutes of computer time to use educational software and/or games, except if/when school age children (ages 5-10) require assistance with their homework.
- Screen Content: Any media presented to children are previewed by teaching staff to ensure they are age-appropriate and free from violence, sexual material, offensive stereotypes, brand promotion, and advertisements.

Problem Resolution Back

The center is committed to resolving problems with parents as quickly as possible. If a parent encounters any problems, the chain of command should be followed. Please discuss the issue with your child's teacher. If you are not satisfied, the Executive Director should be notified. As a last resort, the Board of Directors should be notified.

Research and Observers Back

The Caring Center receives frequent requests from students and researchers to observe our exemplary program. We recognize and appreciate the importance of contributing to the body of knowledge regarding early childhood development. We also respect and protect the routines and privacy of our children and their teachers and families. With prior approval from the Executive Director, and only if observations will not be intrusive or disruptive to the activities of the day, we may permit student observers and/or researchers to conduct observations. No photos or videos will be taken, and no child will ever be directly involved (other than in an anonymous observation) without written permission from his/her parent or guardian.

Visitors / Tours Back

The Caring Center hosts regular group tours to enable prospective clients to become more informed about our unique center and approach. Visit TCC's website (www.thecaringcenter.org) to schedule yourself for one of our upcoming tours. Occasionally, individual visits are also accommodated. Please call for assistance. Visitors will remain in the presence of a Caring Center staff person at all times.

Staff Code of Conduct Back

The Caring Center follows the NAEYC code of conduct. Upon hire and whenever deemed necessary thereafter, the NAEYC code of conduct is reviewed and given to all employees who may come into contact with child(ren) at the center. Our priority is to uphold our ethical responsibilities to children, families, personnel, community, and all other sponsoring agencies at all times. We are committed to maintaining the safety of all our children, as well as the confidentiality of all our families and personnel. Any staff person who is not compliant with the code of conduct will be subject to disciplinary action in accordance with The Caring Center's progressive discipline policy, as outlined in The Caring Center's Employee Handbook.

Any / all persons involved in The Caring Center's early childhood programs are to use the code of conduct as the basis for their actions when working with children, parents, other staff members, volunteers, consultants, and/or members of the community. Any employee who is not compliant with The Caring Center's active supervision policy will be subject to immediate disciplinary action, in accordance with The Caring Center's discipline policy. Volunteers, consultants and/or others who are not compliant with the center's policy may be asked to leave the center and/or to stop their work with The Caring Center. Any person working as a staff member, subcontractor, volunteer (including parents), therapist, one-on-one child support, intern, consultant, or anyone else working with children in our program will indicate (by signature) that they have reviewed, understand, and agree to abide by all the terms of the NAEYC and School District of Philadelphia codes of conduct. As such, they agree that:

- They will never leave a child alone or unattended.
- They will use active supervision strategies to ensure that all children stay safe while in their care. Active supervision strategies include:
    - Set up environment
    - Position staff
    - Scan and Count
    - Listen
    - Anticipate Children's Behavior
    - Engage and Redirect
- They will not allow any practices that are disrespectful, degrading, intimidating, psychologically destructive, or physically harmful to children.
- They will be familiar with the signs of child abuse and neglect, and they will immediately report any symptoms of child abuse as required by law.
- They will be aware of and follow all program safety and emergency procedures.

Parent Code of Conduct Back

The Caring Center is committed to fostering a safe, respectful, and inclusive environment for all children, families, and staff. To support this goal, we require all parents and/or guardians to adhere to the following Parent Code of Conduct. Failure to maintain compliance with the terms of the parent code of conduct may result in a parent or guardian being barred from admission to the center, and/or may result in the dismissal of a parent(s) child(ren) from all TCC's programs:

ALL Parents and/or Guardians of a child enrolled at TCC agree to abide by the following Code of Conduct:

- **Respectful Communication**
  Parents are expected to communicate with all TCC staff, children, and other TCC families in a respectful manner at all times. The use of profanity, and/or yelling, degrading, derogatory or demeaning language, discriminatory or threatening language directed at staff, children, or any other person is strictly prohibited. Any such behavior could lead to the parent being barred from the premises and/or the dismissal of their child from our program.
- **Appropriate Behavior**
  As role models for children, parents must conduct themselves appropriately while on center property. Aggressive behavior, physical or verbal violence, physical discipline (e.g., spanking or striking a child), and/or any form of intimidation – physical or otherwise - will not be tolerated, and may be grounds for immediate removal from the premises and/or immediate dismissal of the parent(s) or guardian(s)' child(ren) from all TCC programs. Similarly, the use of profanity and/or inappropriate sexual jokes, comments, innuendo, etc. will not be tolerated.
- **Punctuality and Attendance**
  Children should be dropped off and picked up during the center's designated hours. Parent(s) agree to adhere to TCC's policies for attendance and timely drop-offs and pick-ups. Repeated non-compliance could lead to late fees and/or dismissal of the child from our program.
- **Custody and Access**
  Legal custody documentation must be submitted to the center. We are legally obligated to follow court-ordered custody arrangements and cannot act on verbal agreements.
- **Issue Resolution and Grievances**
  Should a concern arise; parents are encouraged to discuss it calmly, directly and privately (i.e., not in front of the children) with the appropriate staff member or director. Public confrontations, including those in front of children or other families, are not acceptable. Parents may always request a private conference with their child's teacher and/or center administrators to discuss a concern.
- **Health and Safety Compliance**
  Parents are required to follow all TCC health and safety policies, including illness guidelines, sign-in/out protocols, health assessment and vaccination requirements, and emergency procedures. These rules are in place to protect all children and staff.
- **Privacy and Social Media**
  The confidentiality of our families and staff is a priority. Photos, videos, or personal information of other children or families may not be shared publicly, including on social media, without obtaining explicit written permission in advance.

Supervision of Children Back

Ensuring the safety and well-being of all our children is the Caring Center's top priority. In order to ensure the continued health and safety of all children, The Caring Center staff follow a detailed active supervision plan, based on the fundamental understanding that active supervision requires focused attention and intentional observation of children at all times.

The active supervision plan is reviewed and shared with all employees at the beginning of each school year and/or upon hire for new employees. Caring Center employees understand and utilize all safety systems in place, which include but are not limited to: bells, mirrors, timers, scanning and counting, supervisory lists, and

face-to-name tools. The active supervision policy is followed at all times by all employees, student teachers, therapists, caseworkers, volunteers, and/or any other adults who may come into contact with children at the center. The active supervision plan, as well as any potential concerns, is reviewed at staff meetings at least once per month.

Appropriate ratios of children-to-adults must be maintained at all times. Employees may not leave their assigned group of children at any time, unless appropriate staffing ratios are able to be strictly maintained. Employees must inform a supervisor immediately if their group becomes out of ratio at any time. Volunteers and student teachers may work with children only under the direct supervision of a Caring Center employee. At no time will a volunteer or student teacher be left alone with any children. This policy is designed to maintain a safe, secure environment and to ensure that every child is given the attention and care they need.

Non-Violence Back

The Caring Center promotes nonviolence at all times. Our staff work with the children to foster appropriate pro-social behaviors. Children are encouraged to use conflict resolution and these methods are modeled for the children.

Redirection Back

The ultimate goal of redirection is to teach the child self-control. With a clear understanding of a child's developmental stage, staff members set realistic behavioral limits and expectations. We strive to resolve conflicts in peaceful and logical ways. Children must be given many opportunities to practice appropriate behavior and not be admonished for inappropriate behavior. We view conflict resolution as a teaching opportunity.

Biting Back

Biting can occur during normal child development. When a child is bitten, the nearest staff person shall immediately clean the affected area with soap and water. The staff person will determine whether the skin has been broken. The parent of the bitten child will then be contacted and the appropriate information given. The name of the biter will not be disclosed without his/her parent's agreement.

Preventive strategies to decrease the number of biting incidents are used in the classroom. Some of the techniques we use are:

1. Having more than one of the popular items
2. Designing play area and centers with boundaries that are easily viewed by the teacher and understood by the children
3. Having materials that are organized and in good working order
4. Having activities that provide many ways to respond
5. Having a clear and consistent schedule, and
6. Supporting the children's participation in play by being nearby and available.

Many children with challenging behaviors will benefit from clear directions and clear acknowledgement of their efforts. Visual assistance in the form of photos and picture symbols that help children understand the schedule and the expectations are also useful. Even when preventative measures are taken, a child may need an individualized modification.

Inappropriate Behavior Back

In order to ensure a safe, healthy and positive classroom experience for all students and teachers, The Caring Center has adopted a behavior policy and protocols. In the event that a child's behavior is deemed by The Caring Center's staff to be inappropriate, disruptive, destructive and/or aggressive toward others, the following steps will be taken to address the behavioral concerns:

PHASE 1: *Additional* parent/teacher conferences will be held. **Meet with parents**, teacher and administrator (if applicable).

a. At the classroom teacher's discretion, a conference will be called to discuss any concerns that may arise, including but not limited to: multiple classroom disruptions, continual and inappropriate behavior and/or language, or physical violence such as hitting, pinching, scratching, biting or kicking students and/or staff.
b. There will be written documentation from the teacher(s) and Caring Center staff regarding inappropriate behavior they have observed and the positive discipline techniques used when the concerning behavior and/or language were displayed.
c. Behavioral goals will be discussed and agreed to by both parents and teachers. Reinforcing consistency between home and school is *highly recommended* for effective positive behavior modification.

PHASE 2: Meet with parents, teacher and school administrator(s) to **establish a behavior plan**.

a. Revisit behavioral goals with parents, teacher, school administrator and others involved in the child's care
b. Schedule adjustments may be examined. Teachers and administrators may determine that an adjusted schedule (i.e. shortened hours or different arrival time) is in the best interest of the child and/or class.
c. Discussion with all parties about resources and goals for obtaining outside help for child (if applicable). Professional evaluation and/or support may be sought. The Caring Center administrative staff will help facilitate the referral process, working with parents, staff and specialists to help address the child's needs.

PHASE 3: Discussion with parents, teacher and administrative staff to discuss progress toward goals and **determine appropriate action / next steps** for addressing child's behavior.

a. Revisit action plan with parents, teachers, center administrator and specialist (if applicable).

***** Phases 1,2,3 may be revisited for subsequent incidents, as Administrators deem appropriate***

FINAL PHASE: The Caring Center is committed to seeking solutions for difficult situations with children and families. However, **we take aggressive, physical behavior toward children, staff and/or parents very seriously. We will respond accordingly with an acceleration of the three phases outlined above, as we deem necessary.**

If the Center determines that the Child poses a direct threat to others (i.e., a significant risk to the health or safety of others that cannot be eliminated by reasonable modifications of policies, practices, or procedures, and/or by the provision of auxiliary aids or services), or the Center determines at its

own discretion that the Child poses a direct threat to him or herself, the Center may require the Child to withdraw immediately. If behavioral goals, action plans and/or coordinated efforts between staff and family do not resolve the concerning behavior(s), the child's enrollment in the program may be ended, at the sole discretion of the center director or executive director. In the event that a child is dismissed from the program due to inappropriate and/or aggressive behavior, no refunds will be given. The Caring Center recognizes that children are active, and roughhouse with each other; this policy is not intended to affect children engaging in age-appropriate childhood activities.

Behavioral Health Crisis Back

When a child expresses - verbally, in writing, or through their behavior - the desire or intention to inflict serious or potentially life-threatening injury to themselves or other people, the following steps will be taken / protocols implemented:

Step One: Maintain a safe environment for all surrounding children and staff.

a. Assigned staff provide immediate and continuous active supervision

Step Two: Assess for risk

a. Gather information (e.g., why the child made the statement and/or if the child has a plan). Identify potential threat to self or others.
b. Understand and give attention to verbal and non-verbal body language.
c. Demonstrate empathy and provide calming assurance to counter the child's aggressive behavior.

Step Three: Notify available administrator/s immediately

a. Behavior Specialist should be first point of contact to assist in identifying the behavior and attempting to calm the child.
b. If Behavior Specialist is not available, contact another program administrator.

Step Four: Teacher (or administrator) notifies parents

a. Explain the situation that occurred to parent or guardian and the steps teacher/administrators have taken to support the child.
b. At the discretion of center administrators, parent(s) may be asked to come pick up the child immediately.
c. Advise parent or guardian to closely monitor child's behavior at home to ensure safety.
d. Parents are given information on community crisis intervention resources (*Crisis intervention Hotline*: 215-685-6440, service available 24/7, 7 days a week)

Step Five: Exclusion / Reinstatement

e. At the sole discretion of the center's administration, the child may be excluded from care until appropriate protocols and supports can be established for the child's safe future attendance
f. Parent, designated personnel and/or center administrators will meet to discuss concerns, reinstatement plan (if appropriate), next steps, and any future goals / milestones

Weapons Prohibited Back

No guns, knives or other potentially lethal or non-lethal weapons are allowed in the center at any time. No toy weapons, squirt guns, or items that may look like a potential weapon are allowed in the center at any time.

Smoking and Prohibited Substances Back

Please note that all indoor and outdoor spaces at The Caring Center, and any vehicles that may used by the program, have been designated as non-smoking areas. The use of tobacco in any form, alcohol, or illegal drugs is prohibited on the facility premises. Possession of illegal substances or unauthorized, potentially toxic or harmful substances is prohibited.

All childcare providers and staff will maintain sobriety while providing childcare. Caregivers, staff or other adults who are inebriated, intoxicated, or otherwise under the influence of mind-altering or polluting substances will be required to leave the premises immediately.

Pick-Up by an Adult Who Appears Intoxicated or Impaired Back

To ensure that no child is allowed to leave the care of the center in the custody of a person who is in a physical condition which may prevent him from assuring the child's welfare, The Caring Center adheres strictly to the following policy:

1. If a parent or other person who is authorized to pick up a child enrolled at The Caring Center comes to the center intoxicated or in an impaired physical condition which may prevent him from ensuring the child's welfare, he/she will be required to meet with the Education Director and/or Executive Director before he/she may pick up the child.
2. Under no circumstances will a child be released to a parent or other authorized adult who appears intoxicated/impaired without the adult having first been interviewed by the Education Director and/or Executive Director. The Education Director and/or Executive Director will meet with the parent or other authorized adult, and it will be the responsibility of the Education Director and/or Executive Director to determine if, in their opinion, the person appears intoxicated / impaired.
3. In the event that a parent or other person authorized to pick-up a child is determined to be intoxicated or in an impaired condition, The Caring Center staff will:
    a. Notify the Executive Director (if they have not already been notified)
    b. Make alternative arrangements for child pick-up, including, attempting to contact another person on the Authorized Child Pick-up List
    c. Notify the parent(s) of the child (if they are not the ones who are intoxicated or impaired)
    d. Notify Parents of other children the person has been authorized to pick-up
4. For any parent or other authorized person who arrives at the center to pick up an enrolled child, and is determined to be in an intoxicated or physically impaired condition, the following will occur:
    a. One written warning
    b. Removal from the list of individuals authorized to pick up a child after the second occurrence
    c. Repeated occurrences will be reported to the appropriate authorities
5. The Education Director and/or Executive Director are authorized to carry out the directives of this policy.

Child Abuse and Neglect Back

The Caring Center staff and parents understand that the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania requires that all childcare center employees are mandated reporters. Caring Center staff participate in annual trainings, and they are aware that they must legally report any and all suspected cases of child abuse and/or neglect. In cases of suspected child abuse and/or neglect, the Executive Director and/or Education Director is immediately notified. They inform Child Line (1-800-932-0313) and the appropriate forms are completed.

Elwyn, Inc. Non-Public School Program Crisis Intervention Response Team (215-895-5545) is available to provide Consultation and Support Services for:

- Suspected Child Abuse/ Sexual Abuse
- Mental Health Issues

Contact Us Back

- **Phone:** (215) 386 – 8245
- **Fax:** (215) 386-8252
- **Address:** 3101 Spring Garden Street, Philadelphia, PA 19104
- **Website:** www.thecaringcenter.org
- **General Email:** info@thecaringcenter.org
- **TCC's Tax ID Number (EID):** 23-2623819

Direct Classroom Phone Extensions Back

Please call TCC's main phone number (215-386-8245), and then dial one of the following extensions to reach your child's classroom directly:

- **Infant 1** – Ext. 306
- **Infant 2** – Ext. 305
- **Young Toddler 1** – Ext. 307
- **Young Toddler 2** – Ext. 308
- **Toddlers** – Ext. 315
- **Toddler 1** – Ext. 319
- **Pre-K 1** – Ext. 318
- **Pre-K 2** – Ext. 316
- **Pre-K 4** – Ext. 317
- **Kindergarten Transition** – Ext. 325
- **School Age** – Ext. 326 (& 327)

For Questions / Assistance With	Please Contact
Enrollment / Enrollment paperwork, Add-a-day requests, Schedule changes, Departures	Teresa Barr-Mann, Office Manager Email: tbarr@thecaringcenter.org (Phone Ext. 301)
Billing, Payments, ELRC (CCIS) Coverage, Attendance	Elizabeth Perez, Business Assistant Email: eperez@thecaringcenter.org (Phone Ext. 300) OR Leah Long, Business Director Email: llong@thecaringcenter.org (Phone Ext. 302)
Meals, Food program, Special Diets / Food Allergies, Hospitality	Erica Lewis, Hospitality Manager Email: elewis@thecaringcenter.org (Phone Ext. 303)
Curriculum, Classroom Activities, Teaching Staff, PD, Licenses & Accreditations	Linda Li, Education Director Email: lli@thecaringcenter.org (Phone Ext. 320)
TCC Policies, Parent Concerns, Supervision, Grants, Budget, Licenses & Accreditations, Partnerships	Justin Bell, Executive Director Email: jbell@thecaringcenter.org (Phone: Ext. 312)
Birthday Celebrations (Cupcake Requests)	1st talk to your child's teacher, then stop by the front desk (in-person) to order cupcakes (or call 215-386-8245)

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ACKNOWLEDGMENT & AGREEMENT:
TCC FAMILY HANDBOOK

At enrollment, the TCC Family Handbook is shared with each new family (electronically), and it is posted on TCC's website for convenient access. It is the responsibility of each parent of any child enrolled at The Caring Center to read and understand the policies outlined in the Family Handbook. Please do not hesitate to ask your child's teacher, a TCC administrator, and/or one of the folks at the front desk if you have any questions.

No Family Handbook can anticipate every circumstance or policy question that may arise. Over time, the need may arise for The Caring Center to develop new policies and/or to change existing policies or procedures that are described in the Family Handbook. The Caring Center reserves the right to revise, supplement, change, addend and/or rescind any policies or portions of the Family Handbook at any time, as it deems appropriate in its sole and absolute discretion. As soon as practical, The Caring Center will notify all families and team members of any such changes.

The terms, policies, and procedures contained in this version of The Caring Center Family Handbook supersede those contained in any previous versions of the Family Handbook. Your signature indicates that you have been provided access to The Caring Center Family Handbook, and that you have read and understood all of the above statements.

Your signature also confirms that you understand, acknowledge and agree that you are responsible for reading and familiarizing yourself with the contents of The Caring Center Family Handbook and any related addenda, revisions or updates, AND that you agree to follow and be bound by the policies and terms described within The Caring Center's Family Handbook at all times.

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Parent / Guardian Name (*Please Print*)

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Parent / Guardian Signature **Date** (*mm/dd/yy*)