

PARENT HANDBOOK



Way to Grow Learning and Development Center

115 Howard Street

Jersey Shore, PA 17740

Phone: 570-398-4025

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Waytogrowchildcare.org

Hours: Monday-Friday 5:00am-midnight

(Additional hours according to need)

Mission Statement

A Way to Grow Learning and Development Center exists to provide a safe, developmentally appropriate environment for children, birth to thirteen years of age. Our focus is to provide a stimulating early care and education experience, which promotes each child's social/emotional, physical and cognitive development. Our goal is to encourage every child to be enthusiastic about learning for life.

General Guidelines

An “open door” visitation policy is in effect at all times. However, if you need to discuss something specific at length with a teacher or the director, please make arrangements in advance.

Access to a child’s records shall be limited to the parents, direct care giver, and school administrator or director. All other persons must obtain written permission from child’s parent(s).

Discipline/Suspension/Expulsion policy

Way to grow is a place where your child is encouraged to explore their world and stretch the boundaries of their possibilities. For us to maintain this atmosphere, there must be some general guidelines.

Children are helped to learn respect for the rights and property of others. Activities that will not be tolerated are:

- Verbal outbursts: screaming, swearing, malicious name-calling
- Physical actions such as striking, biting, pushing, or any other intentional harm to anyone
- Stealing or lying
- Destruction of personal or school property

Children exhibiting inappropriate behavior will be given a verbal warning and explanation of what was done wrong. After that, children are given “time out” where they will be removed from the group activity and given a quiet time to sit and reflect on their behavior. Documentation with a written “minor” report will be given to the parents. In the event that an incident is considered to have a malicious intent a “major” report will be given to parents. Three written “major” incident reports for a child’s behavior will result in a 1-day suspension. This day will not be deducted from the cost of tuition.

If after the 1-day suspension, your child is still displaying the negative or malicious behavior, we will work with you to develop a plan of action to help detour the behavior. If after several attempts to redirect the negative actions with the action plan and the behavior hasn’t changed or improved, your child may be expelled from our center. We do not take expulsion lightly. We will exhaust every possible effort before it is even considered.

Our caregivers make a conscious effort to reinforce good behavior with positive comments and reactions. They will always strive to have a proactive response to children. This will curb many chances for difficult situations. We do frequently prefer to acknowledge good behavior rather than drawing attention to negative behavior.

Children are welcomed to bring in a security item from home such as a stuffed animal, blanket, pillow, etc. for naptime. We cannot permit children to bring play guns, swords, or any other play items to school.

These are difficult for children to share and this does not promote positive socialization among children in group settings. If an item other than for naptime is brought into school we cannot accept responsibility for it.

Please remember, because of immaturity, misrepresentation of what takes place in the childcare center may occur. Parents are always to listen to their children and then come in to talk with the director to discuss any concerns you might have. Communication with your child's caregivers is of utmost importance.

Within 30 days of admittance a developmental checklist will be shared with parents/guardians. If you have any questions concerning this checklist please make arrangements to speak to your child's teacher. This is a great way to mark the progress or/and areas of need for your child.

Keystone STARS, is a program created by the state of Pennsylvania to improve, support, and recognize the continuous quality improvement efforts of early learning programs. Way to Grow will be participating in the STARS program.

The Creative Curriculum is used as a daily education guide for our children six weeks to five years of age. This curriculum has a solid foundation of research and has five components to help the staff in providing good decisions, routines and experiences for the children. These components are getting to know the children, creating a learning and responsive environment, determining what the children learn, the teacher's role and the family's role.

Admissions and Eligibility Policies

Way to Grow Learning and Development Center does not discriminate on the basis of race, religion, or ethnic background.

Forms required by our licensing agency, Department of Public Welfare, are necessary for enrollment and admission into our program. These forms include:

- Application with financial obligation agreement, updated twice a year, and CACFP, updated on a yearly basis
- Health appraisal (due within 45 days of admission date and subsequent each year your child is enrolled in the childcare and twice a year for infants and toddlers up to 3 years of age)
- Emergency contact, every year of enrollment (please contact the office immediately with any changes)
- Non-discriminatory form
- Parental consent for picture taking
- Registration fee of \$20.00 per child (non-refundable)
- Permission to apply sunscreen
- Getting to know you form

Way to Grow takes part in the Child and Adult Care Food Program (CACFP). This requires financial information. This paperwork must be filled out and returned to the office prior to your child's first day. This information is confidential and kept in a locked area.

Initial and continuing eligibility will be determined by the director considering the special needs of the child, and the well-being of all the children as a whole. Children who cannot function within the group setting may be denied initial or continuing eligibility. The director will provide written notice of the decision to the parent who may then appeal the determination with the director.

Getting to know you

All Parents/Guardians will be asked to complete a *Getting to know you* report for your child's teacher to review prior to the first evaluations. This will take place within the first 45 days of enrollment. Parents/guardians are given the option to meet with the child's teacher at that time.

Parent/Teacher Conferences

Parent/teacher conferences will be scheduled to discuss your child's progress. These will take place in February and October. Four times a year, the staff will complete individual child profiles through observation and authentic assessment. The outcome is based on Pennsylvania Standards and the Creative Curriculum Developmental Standards.

As your child transitions from one room to another we will be notifying you prior to the move. You will have the opportunity to meet the new teacher and learn about the new room. The children will have the opportunity to spend time in this new room and become acquainted with the staff and children prior to the permanent move.

Way to Grow's list of stakeholders will be provided every January in the newsletter. Stakeholder information will be provided upon the request of parent/guardian. A stakeholder is a business or organization in the community that has interest in the transitioning of children. We would appreciate input from parents/guardians about stakeholders that need to be added to our list.

Attendance

It is of utmost importance to sign your child in and out each day on the attendance sheets.

- New Year's Day
- Thanksgiving
- Fourth of July
- Labor Day
- Memorial Day
- Christmas Day

If your child is enrolled at a full-time basis (Over 30 hours a week) parents are eligible for one week of vacation a year. This is equal to 5 days. You may use this at any time during the year, just let the director know. You can also break up the week and use the vacation one at a time for holidays that we are closed. Example: So, if you would like to use one day for New Year's Day just divide the weekly payment by five and deduct one day. (Weekly payment \$125.00 divided by 5 = 25 so you would pay \$100.00 for the week. Please write on check or envelope that you are using a day of your vacation.

Payments are to be made by check, cash, or credit card payment on Monday or first day of care for that week of service. This payment must be placed in the payment box or given to the director. Payments will not be accepted by anyone else in the building.

We reserve the right to discontinue service if the payment is not made on first day of care each week. Suspension will continue until payment is made in full with a 10% late fee added per week. Any check that is returned for nonsufficient funds will also be charged \$35.00 and additional attorney fees. It is very important to make prompt payments for the successful continuation of the childcare facility. Payments are the business end of the childcare and have no relevance to personal feelings and care for your children.

Should there be a need for a tuition increase parents will be notified prior to the change.

Way to Grow will accept payment from the state subsidy program, STEP. This is the client's responsibility to apply and maintain proper paperwork. You will be responsible for full payment if you are deemed not eligible for STEP and your child/children are still attending.

We require a two week notice from the parents prior to withdrawing your child from Way to Grow Learning and Development Center.

Parent Provided Supplies

Please label all belonging that are brought into the building

Dress children appropriately for the weather. We will go outside daily, weather permitting. Please keep in mind to not wear your children's best clothing to school. This is a great time for them to explore the world around them by playing outside, art, yummy food, and by just being children.

- Children should wear sneakers. Flip flops are not permitted
- Blanket or sleeping bag for nap time (these will be sent home on last day of the week to launder or when needed)
- Toothbrush
- Formula/Breastmilk for infants (we will provide Parent's Choice formula, any others will need to be brought from home)
- Extra set of clothing
- Bottles empty or already premade (these will be sent home daily for cleaning)
- Cloth diapers are welcomed (we will place these directly into a baggy after changing your little ones for safe laundering at home)
- You are always welcomed to provide special snacks for your child's birthday or celebration
- Sun Block (this is needed for all children)

Way to Grow Learning and Development Center will provide diapers and wipes for our little ones not ready for the potty. We will be using Cuties and non-scented Cuties wipes. If your child has an allergy to these products, please provide from home.

Health Procedures

According to Department of Public Welfare, our licensing agency children are not allowed in our care if they exhibit any of these:

Fever of 101.5 or higher (must be fever free 24 hours without medicine prior to returning)

- Impetigo
- Ringworm
- Pinkeye
- Lice (Check from employees prior to coming back)
- Any other communicable diseases

Important Medicine Information

- **We require a note of remittance from your child's doctor before your children may return to childcare**
- **If your child is in need of medication you must have it in the original bottle from the pharmacy with the doctor's instructions clearly on the container.**
- **You must also sign a medicine log from your child's classroom.**
- **If you need over the counter medicine administered you must also sign the medicine log from your child's classroom.**
- **If the instructions on the back of the bottle do not include your child's age or their current weight you must get a written note from your doctor with dosage amounts and times to administer.**

Please remember that these items are a state regulation and are extremely important for your child's safety.

Provided Meals and Snacks Nutrition and Physical Activity

Child Care Wellness Policy - Nutrition

One in four children in America are showing the same signs of serious malnourishment as children in Africa. However, in America this is due more to the quality of the food consumed rather than a lack of food. Nearly 30% of calories in the average American diet come from processed, fast, and junk food, which provide very little nutrition.

Although the current CACFP Food Program requirements address basic nutritional needs, Amy & Kids Co. decided to adopted more stringent standards to address nourishment issues, help prevent childhood obesity, and promote the development of lifelong healthy habits.

Child Care Wellness Policy: Nutrition Environment

- Children will wash their hands before and after every meal and snack.
- Foods will be served family style; children will be encouraged to serve themselves and decide how much to eat.

- Children will be encouraged – but never forced - to try new or less favored foods by taking a “practice bite.”
- Food will never be withheld or forced as punishment.
- Healthy foods and habits will be promoted through posters and planned activities.
- Parties and celebrations will focus on activities rather than food, and will include healthy foods in addition to any special treats.

Child Care Wellness Policy: Drinks

- Drinking water will be available for children to access independently. Infants six months and older will be offered water in sippy cups several times daily.
- Juice will never be served to infants under 12 months old, and will be served no more than three times a week to children over 12 months old. When juice is served it will only be 100% fruit or vegetable juice.
- Only 1% or skim milk will be served to children aged 12 months and older. Infants under 12 months will only be fed breastmilk or formula, unless a doctor's order is on file.
- Milk will be unflavored most of the time, although flavored milk may be offered on special occasions.
- Soda and sugary drinks like Kool-Aid will never be served.

Child Care Wellness Policy: Meals

- Meals and snacks will take place at the table; children will not be allowed to walk around with food or drinks. Infants and toddlers will not be allowed to walk around with bottles or sippy cups.
- Food will be prepared in a manner that reduces fat, calories, sugar, and sodium as much as possible.
- A variety of fresh fruits and vegetables, with an emphasis on seasonal produce, will be served on a regular basis.
- Whole grains will be served at least once each day; “white” grains will only be served if no whole grain alternative is available.
- Ready-to-eat breakfast cereals will contain no more than 6 grams of sugar per serving.
- A variety of proteins will be served weekly, including legumes, cheese, eggs, fish, poultry, and meat.
- Legumes and fish will each be served at least once every two weeks.
- Processed meats will be served less than once a week and will be nitrate/nitrite free.
- Only real cheese will be served; no processed cheese or cheese foods will be served.
- No pre-fried food items (chicken nuggets, fish sticks, french fries, tator tots) will be served unless no more than 35% of their total calories are from fat. Instead, chicken nuggets, fish sticks, french fries, and the like will be home-made.
- Sweet baked goods will be served less than once a week, only for snack, and will be home-made and/or whole grain when possible.
- Processed foods in general will be limited; foods will be made “from scratch” as time allows.
- Organic foods and foods without hydrogenated fats and/or high fructose corn syrup will be served when available.

Child Care Wellness Policy: Weekly Menus

- A four-week cycle of weekly menus that change with the seasons are planned with the above guidelines in mind.
- Weekly menus include seasonal foods, as well as foods from a variety of cultures.

- Special dietary needs and food allergies will be respected. Weekly menus will be changed so children with food allergies or special dietary needs can eat the same foods as the other children.

Child Care Wellness Policy - Physical Activity

The average child is less active now than at any other time in history, with disastrous results. It is estimated that [childhood obesity has more than tripled](#) in the past 30 years, and up to one-third of all children now have a weight problem.

To [promote physical activity](#), combat childhood obesity, and help promote an active lifestyle, I have adopted the following physical activity policies:

Child Care Wellness Policy: Physical Environment

- All children, including infants, will have ample open and safe space for moving and being active.
- A rotating variety of safe indoor equipment (soft balls, push/pull toys, etc) will be available.
- Children will have access to large outdoor play equipment (climbers, slides) at all times.
- Children will have a wide variety of outdoor portable play equipment (balls, bikes, etc) to choose from at all times.
- Outdoor portable play equipment will be freely available for children at all times.
- Inactive time will be limited as much as possible; a balance of quiet and active activities will be offered daily.

Child Care Wellness Policy: Active vs Inactive Time

- Children will have the opportunity to play actively at least 60 minutes each day.
- Weather permitting, children will play outdoors daily. Active play will be planned indoors during inclement weather.
- Both structured and unstructured physical activities will be available regularly, for children of all ages.
- Infants will have “tummy time” two to three times a day, while the child is awake.
- Physical activity will be neither denied or required as a form of punishment.
- Screen time will generally be limited to 2 hours per week. No child will ever be required to watch TV.
- Inactive time will be limited as much as possible; a balance of quiet and active activities will be offered daily.

Child Care Wellness Policy: Encouraging Physical Activity

- Children are encouraged to wear clothing they can move freely in and get dirty.
- Children are redirected to safe physical activities and involved in discussions about safety as needed.
- Daily lesson plans include fun and engaging physical activities for children of all ages.

- Children are encouraged to be physically active through teacher-directed activities throughout each day.

Child Care Wellness - Education

- Children will be offered teacher-directed nutrition and/or physical activity education at least once a week. Education will be provided through informal discussions and/or books, games, and activities and promote good nutrition and physical activity.
- Parents will receive nutrition and/or physical education materials at least four times a year. Materials may include handouts, articles, or links to online resources.
- Teachers will continue to receive training in nutrition and/or physical activity as part of required continuing education, at least twice a year. Education may be obtained through reading articles, workshops, webinars, and the like.

Commitment to Child Wellness

I believe that it's just as important for children to develop a healthy lifestyle as it is to learn the basics of literacy, math, science and social studies. As a member of Let's Move! Child Care and proud recipient of a CACFP Wellness Grant, I am committed to promoting child wellness and providing the high quality care that enables children to grow happy and healthy.

Way to Grow will provide all home cooked meals and snacks. We will provide breakfast (if you are dropping off later than 8am please make sure your children have had breakfast), lunch, snack, and dinner. We will do our best to accommodate different items for your children that they can eat due to allergies. If we cannot provide alternatives, such as soy milk, it is your responsibility to provide them. Please notify the office with said allergies.

Inclusion Policy

At way to grow, we understand that every child learns differently. We will do everything within our abilities to make accommodations for your young learner. If an IEP, IFSP or any special need is documented we will work with you to ensure all instructions are being followed. Please just let us know. We adhere very strictly with Pa Codes for child care and if there is an accommodation that your child requires but is not listed, please let us know and we will work with you to correct any issues (see below).

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

Pennsylvania Code for child care center compliance.

§ 3270.26. Compliance with nondiscrimination statutes.

(a) A certificate of compliance will not be granted by the Department to a legal entity unless compliance with civil rights laws and applicable regulations has been met. The applicable laws as identified on the certificate of compliance application are:

- (1) The Pennsylvania Human Relations Act (43 P. S. § § 951—962.2).
 - (2) The Age Discrimination Act of 1975 (42 U.S.C.A. § § 6101—6107).
 - (3) Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964 (42 U.S.C.A. § § 2000d—2000d-4a).
 - (4) Title VII of the Civil Rights Act of 1964 (42 U.S.C.A. § § 2000e—2000e-5).
 - (5) Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 (29 U.S.C.A. § 794).
 - (6) The Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990 (42 U.S.C.A. § § 12101—12514).
- (b) The appropriate forms to establish compliance shall be included with the application for certification.

Persons with disabilities who require alternative means of communication for program information (e.g. Braille, large print, audiotape, American Sign Language, etc.), should contact the Agency (State or local) where they applied for benefits. Individuals who are deaf, hard of hearing or have speech disabilities may contact USDA through the Federal Relay Service at (800) 977-8339. Additionally, program information may be made available in languages other than English.

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

- (1) Mail: U.S. Departments of Agriculture
Office of the Assistant Secretary for Civil Rights
1400 Independence Avenue, SW
Washington, D.C. 20250-9410;
- (2) Fax: (202)690-7442; or
- (3) Email: program.intake@usda.gov

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