





FAMILY HANDBOOK

August 2022



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ABOUT US

Freedom Child Development Center is a Christian childcare center focused on speaking life over the children. We incorporate Bible lessons, memory verses and songs into the HighScope curriculum, a nationally recognized research-based curriculum. Our goal is to maintain a positive learning environment where children feel loved and important! Our top concern is to maintain a safe, healthy, and encouraging atmosphere. Each child is treated as an individual with love and respect. We are blessed to have an incredible staff and group of children at FCDC. We would love to have you visit us soon to learn more about joining our program. As you meet the teachers and children, we believe you will see our beliefs in action. Children are precious gifts that we strive to nurture each day. God made them special and has great plans for their future!

Philosophy

At Freedom Child Development Center, we believe that every child is special, unique, and created with a purpose. We also believe that every child should be free to learn and grow without the burden of negative words or attitudes being a part of their learning experience. We offer a warm, caring, and nurturing environment that is full of positive learning opportunities. Our program is designed to help every child reach his/her full potential. We offer a "hands-on" approach to learning combined with a strong academic curriculum. We believe that play is the child's "work." Through play, they learn many skills while exploring the world around them. We use the HighScope Curriculum throughout our program. Children learn through hands-on experiences while choosing different interest areas that are set up throughout the classroom.

Curriculum

The HighScope Preschool Curriculum is based on the principles of active learning and support of a child's positive interactions with adults and peers. Studies show that the HighScope Preschool Curriculum promotes children's development and provides lasting benefits into adulthood.

Features of a HighScope Program...

Greeting Time, Large Group Time, Planning Time, Work Time, Recall Time, Small Group Time,

Reading, Writing and Math in the High Scope Learning Environment...

As children play, they are interested and engaged in what they are doing. In a HighScope environment, teachers are active participants in their activities. As partners, teachers are given unique opportunities to support reading, writing and math on a child's level and through the child's interests. In a HighScope room, teachers encourage and incorporate the educational tools they need to move to kindergarten while they interact and explore the world around them.

Certification

Freedom Child Development Center is a state licensed private childcare center and participant in the Great Start to Quality Program currently holding a 4 star rating.

Definition of Family

In this handbook we refer to family as a parent, legal guardian, sponsor or anyone else who provides for the well-being, best-interest and responsibility of the child in our care.

Hours of Operation

Childcare services are provided from 6:00 AM to 6:00PM Monday through Friday.

School age care will also be conducted at these times during days off from school, holiday breaks or through summer. During the school year am care is available from 6:00 AM until the bus arrives (typically around 8:00 AM) and from afternoon bus arrival (typically around 4:00 PM) until 6:00 PM.

Holidays

Freedom Child Development Center is closed for specific holidays throughout the year. If a holiday falls on a weekend, Freedom Child Development Center may close for the Friday or Monday around the holiday.

Closed Holidays are as follows:

- New Year's Day
- Good Friday
- Memorial Day
- Independence Day
- Friday before Labor Day
- Labor Day
- Thanksgiving Day
- The Friday following Thanksgiving
- Christmas Eve
- Christmas Day
- New Year's Eve
- One additional day on either side of Christmas & New Year's

Freedom Child Development Center may also close early for events hosted by Freedom Center Church. A notice of this closure or reduced hours will be shared in advance.

Admission & Enrollment

All admission and enrollment forms must be completed, including health appraisal, and shot record or waiver from the health department, with registration fee and first tuition payment paid prior to or on your child's first day of attendance.

A registration fee of \$50.00 is due at the time of enrollment. This fee is non-refundable and can be made in advance to reserve the child's spot on the class roster.

Based on the availability and openings, our facility admits children from 6 weeks up to 12 years of age.

Inclusion

Freedom Child Development Center believes that children of all ability levels are entitled to the same opportunities for participation, acceptance and belonging in childcare. We will make every reasonable accommodation to encourage full and active participation of all children in our program based on his/her individual capabilities and needs.

If your child has an identified special need, please speak with the center directors to create a plan to meet your child's needs. In some circumstances, additional paperwork may be needed from a health care provider.

Freedom Child Development Center is willing to partner and work with outside services such as Early On, speech therapists, occupational therapists, and ABA therapists if this helps your child to meet goals and reach developmental milestones. Per state licensing, there may be paperwork, negative TB test results or background checks that will need to be on file with the center. The cost of any required documents or background checks is not the responsibility of Freedom Child Development Center and should be discussed between the family and the specialty service provider.

Freedom Child Development Center does not currently employ any specialty providers within our center and in some cases referrals to programs with additional supports may be recommended.

Non-Discrimination

At Freedom Child Development Center equal educational opportunities are available for all children, without regard to race, color, creed, national origin, gender, age, ethnicity, religion, disability, or parent/provider political beliefs, marital status, sexual orientation or special needs, or any other consideration made unlawful by federal, state or local laws. Educational programs are designed to meet the varying needs of all students.

Family Activities

Each family is a child's first teacher. We value families as partners in the growth and development of children in our program. We encourage parents and other family members to be involved in the program, participate in events, and provide feedback on the program. We offer a variety of ways in which families can participate. Please check with your child's teacher and look for communication regarding these opportunities to participate.

Confidentiality

Unless we receive your written consent, information regarding your child will not be released with the exception of information required by our regulatory and partnering agencies.

All records concerning children at our program are confidential.

Likewise, Freedom Child Development Center will not inquire to previous childcare centers without your written permission.

Staff Qualifications

Our teachers are hired in compliance with the state requirements and qualifications as a base minimum. All lead teachers have a minimum of a Child Development Associate credential and previous experience.

Caregivers participate in orientation and ongoing training in the areas of child growth and development, healthy and safe environments, developmentally appropriate practices, guidance, family relationships, cultural and individual diversity, and professionalism.

All Freedom Child Development Center staff are CPR & 1st aid certified, have background checks on file with the state of Michigan Child Care Background Check Registry and are A.L.I.C.E. trained.

Freedom Child Development Center is an approved Training Sponsor Organization allowing us to offer professional development for other industry professionals.

We strongly discourage families from entering into employment arrangements with staff (i.e. babysitting). Any arrangement between families and our caregivers outside the programs and services we offer is a private matter, not connected or sanctioned by Freedom Child Development Center.

Child to Staff Ratios

Children are supervised at all times. Breaks are available for caregivers which reduce fatigue and help to ensure alertness.

We maintain the following minimum standards for child to staff ratios:

Age	Child to Staff	Maximum Group Size
≤ 12 months	4 to 1	12
13-30 months	4 to 1	12
30-36 months	8 to 1	16
3 year-olds	10 to 1	No max.
4 year-olds	12 to 1	No max.
5-12 year-olds	18 to 1	No max.

While we maintain the minimum child to staff ratios in all rooms, we strive to have each room overstaffed to encourage a more positive and individualized learning environment. In addition to maximum group sizes, we maintain capacity limits in each room sometimes restricting daily enrollment at a lower group size than state requirements.

Communication & Family Partnership

Daily Communications. Daily notes and updates from center staff will keep you informed about your child's activities and experiences at the center. Once you download and join the ProCare app, you will be able to receive real-time updates throughout the

day. These notifications are customizable in the app/phone settings. This is also a direct line of communication between you and your child's teachers.

Main Lobby Counter. Located in the lobby by the daycare's main entrance, you will find center news, upcoming events, illness notifications, holiday closing dates, announcements, etc.

Newsletters. Periodically we will send out newsletters through the ProCare app to provide center news, events, announcements, etc. Additional newsletters may come from your child's teachers and will be sent home with them. Please make sure to review the information included as they often contain important updates.

Family Night. Family nights are occasionally scheduled. These nights include snacks, drinks and fun filled age-appropriate activities for families. Family Nights allow families and children time to share, learn, and have fun. Families have an opportunity to be a part of their child's learning experience and connect with other families.

Conferences. Family & teacher conferences occur at least once a year for preschool age children moving into Young 5's or Kindergarten. During these conferences, we will discuss your child's strengths, likes and dislikes, and styles of learning. We will work together to set goals for your child's growth and development as they move closer to making the transition to elementary school. You may request additional conferences regarding your child's progress at any time. We encourage you to communicate any concerns. Conferences are also available to other age groups by request and can be initiated by either the parent or by Freedom Child Development Staff.

Open Door Policy

We are delighted to have family members participate in our program. Parents/Guardians are welcome to visit the program any time during regular program hours. The infant room welcomes parents/guardians to nurse or feed their infants and a nursing mother's room is available in the infant/toddler wing.

Open Door Policy does not mean the doors will be unlocked. For the safety and protection of the children, exterior doors to the building and classroom doors will be kept locked at all times.

In the interest of security, we ask that parents not let anyone they do not know into the building. While exterior and classroom doors are locked, it is important that every measure be taken to prevent anyone who is not allowed on the premises in the building. Parents and authorized pickup people should have a fob to enter the building. Anyone who does not have a fob may use the intercom system and someone from Freedom Child Development Center staff will greet them or allow them into the building. The locked door is first line of defense for everyone, and we ask that everyone do their part to follow the protective policies in place.

Our team will always do their best to speak with parents/guardians. Since staff days are devoted to caring for children, it is usually not feasible to have a long discussion during

regular program hours. If a situation requires a longer discussion, kindly arrange for an appointment.

Publicity

Photos will be taken of the children at the center for use within the center such as on cubbies, bulletin boards or in classroom announcements. Additionally, photos may be used on our website. Written permission will be obtained prior to use of photographs.

Freedom Child Development Center is respectful of any situation where images cannot be taken. The names of children are never used for any kind of publicity.

CURRICULA & LEARNING

Learning Environment

We provide a rich learning environment with curricula that are developmentally appropriate to the specific ages in each classroom. Each of our learning environments are designed to meet the physical needs as well as academic needs of each age group. We have a flexible daily routine that allows children to advance at their own pace. We strongly believe that learning happens through play. Learning and exploring are hands-on and are facilitated through interest areas. Our program is designed to enhance children's development in the following areas: creativity, self-expression, decision-making, problem-solving, responsibility, independence, and reasoning. We encourage openness to that which is different from us, and the ability to work and play with others.

Curricula & Assessment

Freedom Child Development Center uses the HighScope curriculum. As part of this curriculum, we gather information about each child's developmental abilities and evaluate progress so we can modify and adjust what we are doing in our classroom to deliver the best individualized instruction for each child. This evaluation is communicated to families periodically during the school year using various formal and informal tools, forms, and resources.

For information about your child's day, please see copies of daily schedules and lesson plans posted in each classroom or review your child's profile on the ProCare app.

Developmental Screening

Freedom Child Development Center uses the COR Advantage as well as the ASQ and ASQ-SE (ages and stages questionnaire-social emotional) to screen the development of the children. To coincide with curriculum-based assessment(s), we monitor each child's achievement of developmental milestones, share observations with parents/guardians, and provide resource information as needed for further screenings, evaluations, and early intervention and treatment.

If additional resources are recommended, Freedom Child Development Center will meet with the family before proceeding further. The developmental screening process is a

collaborative one, involving parents/guardians and done in conjunction with the child's primary care provider and health, education, and early intervention consultants.

Outings and Field Trips

Weather permitting; we conduct 30 minutes of supervised outdoor play on playgrounds and/or walking trips around the grounds twice a day for all children. Children are accounted for at all times.

From time to time, there may be supervised field trips. This is often a part of our summer latchkey program, though occasionally we may include a field trip for younger ages. *Permission Slips* for each trip must be signed by the child's family.

For field trips, please dress your child appropriately for the season and activity.

Transitions

Your child's transition in childcare should be a positive and exciting learning adventure. We will work with you and your child to ensure the smoothest possible transition occurs as new routines and new people are introduced.

Transition from home to center

Prior to your child's first day, you will have an opportunity to tour the center, meet with your child's teachers, and communicate any anticipated concerns. You are welcome to bring your child along for this visit and we encourage asking any questions you can think of. If you have additional questions after your tour, please feel free to reach out. We are more than happy to answer any of your questions.

Transition between learning programs

Children are transitioned to the next room based on age, developmental readiness, state licensing requirements, and space availability. During the transition, current and future teachers will speak with you to talk through any transition concerns you may have and work to create a plan that will be best for you and your child. Often, we recommend the child visits the next room for short periods of the daily routine to become familiar with the new room. This helps make the transition easier without abruptly moving the child to a new environment.

Transition from Toddlers to 2 ½'s

Children who are 2 ½ and are developmentally ready will be transitioned to the 2 ½ year old room or early preschool program. When considering moving children to the preschool wing we are looking for appropriate speech development, an ability to sit for short periods of time such as greeting time or small group, an ability to self-feed, follow simple instructions, remain at the table and engage with peers and adults.

Due to intervention services, such as Early On, being age restricted this transition can be very impactful on their learning advancements. If any concerns about your child achieving these milestones arise, they will be shared with you before making the transition to the preschool wing.

Our goal is to encourage children to move forward, learn and grow but this is a critical transition, and we strive to set them up for success as they move closer to advancing into grade school.

Transition from Preschool to Young 5's/Kindergarten

Moving from preschool into Young 5's or Kindergarten is a very exciting time. We want to make this transition as positive and enjoyable as possible as our preschoolers make this move. We often include stories, activities, discussions and group times to talk about their new program. If children are moving on to the same school, we try to help them make those connections before they go so they know they will have a friend or two at their new school. We are willing to help support both the child and family through this transition. If there is anything you need support with through this time, please feel free to reach out.

Electronic Media

Our normal daily routine does not include electronic media (television/TV, video, DVD) viewing. Preschool teachers and students may use the Smart Board for educational material such as writing practice, mathematics, or even fine motor support. All electronic media will be screened prior to use and will consist of non-violent and high-quality educational material. Our focus is to provide your child a positive experience with increased understanding of the world. Electronic media will be offered only as a free choice, used to meet a developmental goal, and limited to no more than 120 minutes per week per child.

Friday afternoons in preschool are used as a movie day as teachers reset the space for in-coming church services over the weekend. The movie time is accounted for in the allotted weekly media time. Children are offered other activities to do during movie time if they choose.

Michigan rules prohibit any screen time for children under two. This includes TV, videos and computers.

Multiculturalism

Multiculturalism is vital for all children because it sets social goals and promotes respect for all people and the environment we inhabit. We utilize books, music, games, and a wide range of activities as aids to teach our children respect for our world and the diversity of life upon it.

Celebrations

Celebrations are a wonderful way to include holidays and birthdays into a child's learning experience. Freedom Child Development Center hosts in center celebrations for holidays such as:

New Years: Mini New Years Party

Valentines: Valentine and treat exchange

Easter: Easter Egg Decorating and Egg Hunt

Halloween: Costume and Halloween Party

Thanksgiving: Feast

Christmas: Book exchange and Christmas Party

Parents are encouraged to participate with their children for holiday celebrations and teachers will communicate with parents as the celebration approaches.

Birthdays are also something worth celebrating. Children may bring in a treat or non-food items such as pencils, stickers, or small gift bag items to share with their classmates. For birthday treats, the food item needs to be store purchased, nut free and with an ingredients list attached. Please speak with your child's teacher for a head count and provide enough treats for each child to participate.

If you are hosting a private birthday party outside of the center and plan to pass out invitations to only a select group of children, please deliver the invitations to the teacher and they will discreetly make sure the invitation goes to the appropriate family.

Rest Time

Infants sleep according to their own schedule and are put to sleep on their backs. Caregivers/teachers directly observe infants by sight and sound at all times and check on sleeping infants frequently. All safe sleep practices are followed and blankets, loose fitting sheets or any loose objects are ever placed into the crib with an infant.

After lunch, all children less than 5 years of age, participate in a quiet rest time. Children are not required to sleep and may be given quiet activities.

School age children, although not required, shall be provided an opportunity for a regular rest period if the child desires. For children who do not want to rest, a space and time for quiet play will be made available.

All resting children over the age of 1 year sleep on low standing cots. It is requested that parents provide a fitted sheet and blanket or cot mat for their child. A small pillow and stuffed animal are allowed as well but all nap items need to fit into the provided nap bag for sanitation purposes. Full size pillows or oversize animals will be sent back home with the parent.

Toilet Training

The most important factor in making the toilet learning experience successful and as low-stress as possible is a family/teacher partnership that supports the child. Research indicates that children cannot successfully learn how to use the toilet until they are physically, psychologically, and emotionally ready. Many pediatricians say that most children under 24 months of age are not physically capable of regulating bladder and bowel muscles. Most positive toilet training occurs only after children show signs of physical control or awareness of their bodily functions and when they demonstrate an interest or curiosity in the process. We are committed to working with you to make sure that toilet learning is carried out in a manner that is consistent with your child's physical and emotional abilities and your family's concerns.

Please understand that while we are here to support your family’s potty training efforts, we are also caring for several other children in the classroom. Potty training methods need to be practical for participation in the classroom. It is also recommended that the child’s clothing choice be considered when potty training. Clothing that is difficult to remove before going potty may not provide a positive potty-training experience.

GUIDANCE

General Procedure

Freedom Child Development Center is committed to each student’s success in learning within a caring, responsive, and safe environment that is free of discrimination, violence, and bullying. Our center works to ensure that all students have the opportunity and support to develop to their fullest potential and share a personal and meaningful bond with people in the school community.

Thoughtful direction and planning are used to prevent problems and encourage appropriate behavior. Communicating consistent, clear rules and involving children in problem solving help children develop their ability to become self-disciplined. We encourage children to be fair, to be respectful of other people, of property, and to learn to understand the results of their actions.

Discipline Policy

We believe children thrive in an environment with positive reinforcement and redirection. We work with children to teach them the steps of conflict resolution and include them in the resolution process. We use repetition, reminders, and modeling to coach young children to learn appropriate behaviors. In many cases, redirection may include a time-in approach where the children are guided to an alternative activity as a reset. If behaviors persist, we may use a time-out approach. This approach is used to give the child a break from peers, or the activity and they will only sit at most for one minute per year of their age. Regardless of the strategy used children are provided the opportunity to try again. We believe strongly in re-do’s, and fresh starts.

Additionally, all staff of Freedom Child Development Center are trained and have a signed discipline policy on file. We follow all state guidelines regarding discipline. Families are welcome to review the discipline policy all staff must adhere to, please see the center Director for a copy of the policy.

Challenging Behavior

Children are guided to treat each other and adults with self-control and kindness.

Each student at Freedom Child Development Center has a right to:

- Learn in a safe and friendly place
- Be treated with respect
- Receive the help and support of caring adults

When a child becomes verbally or physically aggressive, we intervene immediately to protect all of the children. Our usual approach to helping children with challenging behaviors is to show them how to solve problems using appropriate interactions. When discipline is necessary, it is clear, consistent and understandable to the child. We maintain a zero tolerance to bullying. If you have any concerns about this at any time, please report it to the Director of the Center.

Physical Restraint

Physical restraint is not used or permitted for discipline. There are rare instances when we need to ensure a child's safety or that of others and we may restrain a child by gently holding him or her only for as long as is necessary for control of the situation. If an event like this were to occur, the family will be notified with a documented incident report that is signed by center staff and the parent. A copy will be kept for the child's file and copies can be made to be sent home if requested.

Notification of Behavioral Issues to Families

If a child's behavior/circumstance is of concern, communication will begin with the parents as the first step to understanding the child's individual needs and challenges. We will work together to evaluate these needs in the context of our program.

On rare occasions, a child's behavior may warrant the need to find a more suitable setting for care. Examples of such instances include:

- A child appears to be a danger to others including peers or staff.
- Continued care could be harmful to, or not in the best interest of the child as determined by a medical, psychological, or social service personnel.
- Undue burden on our resources, staff and finances for the child's accommodations for success and participation.

TUITION AND FEES

Important Notice

All payment and fee processing will be completed by the Director of Freedom Child Development Center. He/she will be in charge of collecting tuition and other fees and contacting families regarding payment issues. If you have a question or concern regarding a payment or fee, please contact the center Director via phone, email or through the ProCare app. No other staff within Freedom Child Development Center have the authority to adjust, modify, eliminate or charge any transactions to a billing account.

Scheduling

Schedules are due by noon on Thursdays for the coming week. Reminders will be sent via the ProCare app to remind families that schedules should be submitted. Schedules should be sent as a response through the ProCare app. Please list which days your child will be attending and if they will be dropped off earlier than 7 AM.

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- If we do not receive your child's schedule by noon on Thursday, you will automatically be charged for the same schedule as the prior week.
 - If your needed schedule is fewer days than the prior week's schedule the billing will not be adjusted, and you will be responsible to pay for days scheduled.
 - In the case that you need more days than the prior week's schedule, please contact the center to see if there is availability in your child's class. You will be charged for the additional days.

Tuition Rates

A detailed rate sheet is included at the back of the parent handbook. Pricing is broken down based on ages and number of days scheduled for each week.

Freedom Child Development Center requires that a 2 day per week minimum be maintained as a part of your child's enrollment. The 2 day per week minimum applies to all children from birth through preschool and for summer latchkey. The 2 day per week minimum applies even during times of sickness, vacations, holiday breaks, etc...

In the case that Freedom Child Development Center is only open for 3 or less days for the week (ex. Christmas or New Year's weeks during some years) the 2 day per week minimum will be waived. Freedom Child Development Center will make families aware of this change when it applies.

Families are responsible to pay for the number of days scheduled even if their child is unable to attend. This helps ensure adequate staffing as staff are scheduled based on the scheduled attendance of the children.

There are some circumstances where a child's enrollment may be temporarily suspended. A deposit equal to one week of the child's current enrollment will be required and kept on file as a billing credit for the duration of the suspension. When your child returns to care, the deposit credit will be applied to their first week back. If your child will not be returning to Freedom Child Development Center at the end of the suspension, the deposit is non-refundable and will no longer be kept as a credit on the billing account. For information regarding temporary suspension of enrollment please speak to the center Director.

Overtime Rates or Adding Extra Days

Overtime rates apply only to half day families and are contingent on prior agreement of hours of care scheduled. A half day is defined as a 5 hour time slot. When the child is not picked up at the end of the 5 hour window, the billing will be adjusted to a full day of care. In the case that pick up exceeds the 5 hour time slot frequently, the family will be removed from eligibility of the half day program and will only be able to schedule full day care.

We understand there are times that unforeseen need for care arises. Families are always welcome to call and inquire on availability for the child to add on for the day. We always do our best to accommodate those needs. However, each room is staffed based

on ratio and the number of children scheduled for the day so availability is not guaranteed. When we can accommodate the additional time, we will adjust the billing accordingly.

Payment

Payment is always due in advance with no deduction for any absences, holidays, or closures due to inclement weather, power outages, or other situations beyond our control. Payment is due by the first day of your child's attendance for the week.

A non-refundable registration fee of \$50 is due at the time of enrollment.

An annual supply fee of \$50 is due each August before the new school year.

Methods of Payment

Several methods of payment are available for families' convenience. Families can pay by cash, check, automatic electronic funds transfer or credit card. To set up automatic, reoccurring payments, please use the ProCare app under the "transactions" section.

Late Payment Charges

Late payments can pose serious problems for our programs and as a result, the business does not have the latitude to allow families to accrue a balance equal to more than one week of tuition. **Late payments will result in the imposition of late payment fees. Failure to pay childcare payments will result in childcare services being terminated.**

If payment is not received on the day that it is due, a late fee of \$25 will be added to your next tuition payment. Repeated late payments will result in your family being required to set up automatic payments or credit card payments.

Any payments made will be applied to the oldest charges and late fees may still apply if the account is not paid in full by the next tuition due date.

If an outstanding balance remains, Freedom Child Development Center reserves the right to attempt to recover payment in small claims court and/or your account may be sent to a 3rd party collections agency. You will be responsible for all expenses associated with these actions including all court and attorney fees.

Credit Card Processing Fees

Freedom Child Development Center offers a variety of methods to pay tuition whether in person or through the ProCare app. For families who choose to pay their bill using ACH payments using their bank account and routing number no additional fees are added for processing. For those who choose to use a credit card or debit card number to pay for tuition, Freedom Child Development Center will charge a \$5.00 processing fee per credit card transaction. This policy is in place to offset the costs of credit card processing fees in the interest of keeping reasonable tuition rates. Additional fees may apply if a returned credit card transaction occurs.

Returned Checks/Rejected Transaction Charges

All returned checks or rejected ACH (automatic debits) or credit card transactions will be charged a fee of \$25.00. This charge may be collected electronically. Two or more returned checks or rejected transactions will result in your account being placed on “cash only” status.

Late Pick-up Fees

Late pick-up is not a normal program option and will only be considered as an exceptional occurrence. Late fees of \$2.00 per minute per child will be assessed beginning at 6:00 PM and will be due upon arrival paid to the staff person who stayed late. **Repeated late pick up may result in child care services being terminated.**

Other Fees

- From time-to-time there may be additional fees associated with special activities or field trips. These fees are due prior to the event, activity or trip.
- Each child will be given a bag to store their belongings for rest time. The first bag is included with registration. If a bag needs to be replaced, it is the responsibility of the parent to provide one or to purchase a replacement from FCDC. The cost of a replacement bag is \$3.
- Upon registration, families will be issued one door fob that will allow access to the building. Additional fobs are available upon request for \$10 each.

Credits & No Credits

- **Families are responsible** to pay for the number of days scheduled each week. No credits are given for sick days or days children are not in attendance when scheduled. Additionally, credit is not given if a child is in attendance and is sent home for any reason.
- **Weather-related or Environmental Disaster or Pandemic** – in the event of a serious crisis during which we are prohibited from operating, a credit for any scheduled days that we are unable to accommodate will be credited back to the family’s billing account. The credit will remain until we are able to return to safe operation and will apply to the first week back in attendance.
- **Credit may be given for Serious Illness/Injury** – In the unfortunate event of extenuating circumstances such as your child is hospitalized, absent due to a serious contagious disease or serious illness or injury, credit may be issued for any scheduled days they are unable to attend. A written doctor’s note is required to receive a credit.

ATTENDANCE & WITHDRAWAL

Absence

If your child is going to be absent or arrive after 10:00 AM, please call us at 810.714.2235 or through the ProCare app. We will be concerned about your child if we

do not hear from you. Additionally, if your child does not arrive by 10:00 AM, we may make staffing adjustments and your schedule may no longer be accommodated. If you have not contacted us and staffing changes have been made, you are still responsible to pay for the scheduled day.

If a school age child will not be attending before or after school care, please notify us via phone or the ProCare app as soon as possible. If your child is scheduled to get off the bus in the afternoon and they do not arrive, we are required to treat this as a missing child situation. If this occurs, we will contact you first, then the school and any emergency contacts. If your child cannot be located or information has not been shared we will contact the police in the interest that your child may be missing.

Vacation or Sick Days

Families of children who are in full time attendance, which is defined as consistent enrollment for 5 days each week, are offered 10 credit days per year from September-August. These days can be used for sick days or vacation days.

It is the responsibility of the family to make us aware of the intention to apply one or more of these days to the billing account. We never assume when a family wants to use their days as they can be used individually or accumulated for a longer break.

Withdrawal

A written notice, two weeks in advance, is required by the center when a child is being withdrawn.

Transfer of Records

Whether transitioning to the next program setting or to a new classroom, your child's records will be transferred internally.

If your child is transitioning to a new school, a written request from you with instructions to where the records should be sent is required.

Closing Due to Extreme Weather

Should severe weather or other conditions (i.e., snow, storms, floods, tornadoes, hurricanes, earthquakes, blizzards, loss of power, loss of water) prevent us from opening on time or at all, notification to the families will be announced through the ProCare app and the center Facebook page.

If it becomes necessary to close early, we will contact you or your emergency contacts as soon as possible. Your child's early pick-up is your responsibility to arrange.

DROP-OFF AND PICK-UP

General Procedure

We open at 6 AM and drop-off is not available prior to the opening. Parents are expected to accompany their children and sign them in.

We close at 6:00 PM. Please allow enough time to arrive, sign your child out, and leave by closing time.

If someone other than the parent will be dropping off or picking up, please make them aware of our drop off and pick up policy.

Cell Phone Usage

The times you spend in the center dropping off and picking up your child are the primary windows of time we have to communicate with you about your child. In order to make the best use of these opportunities, as well as to be attentive to your child and other children, we ask that you NOT use your cell phone at any time while visiting the center.

Authorized & Unauthorized Pick-up

Your child will only be released to you or those persons you have listed as Emergency and Release Contacts. If you want a person who is not identified as an Emergency and Release Contact to pick-up your child, you must notify us in advance, in writing. Your child will not be released without prior written authorization. The person picking up your child will be required to show a picture ID as verification. Please notify your pick-up person of our policy.

In order to safeguard your child we will need copies of any court ordered custody agreements. Without a custody agreement, we are not able to prevent the release of your child to a parent.

If a child has not been picked up after closing and we have not heard from you, attempts will be made to contact you, and the contacts listed as Emergency and Release Contacts. Provisions will be made for someone to stay with your child as long as possible, but if after 2 hours we have not been able to reach you or a person listed as an Emergency and Release Contact, we will call the local child protective services agency.

Right to Refuse Child Release

We may refuse to release children if we have reasonable cause to suspect that any person picking up a child is under the influence of drugs or alcohol, or is physically or emotionally impaired in any way that may endanger the child. To protect your child, we may request that another adult listed as an Emergency and Release Contact pick-up the child or we may call the police to prevent potential harm to your child. Reoccurring situations may result in the release of your child from the program.

PERSONAL BELONGINGS

What to Bring

- **Infants:**
 - Prepared bottles labeled with date bottle was prepared/pumped and child's full name.

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- Baby food or cereal labeled with child's full name and contents. Please indicate when it was prepared if it is homemade.
 - Diapers and wipes
 - Extra clothes
 - Bibs (we have some but just in case)
 - Favorite blanket or comfort item (cannot go in crib)
 - Snowsuit/winter coat, mittens & hat for winter walks in. the stroller
 - Pacifier & pacifier clip if using them.
 - **Toddlers:**
 - Diapers and wipes
 - Standard crib sheet for their cot
 - Blanket for nap
 - Pillow if desired
 - "Lovey" for nap if desired
 - Snow gear for playing outside in the cold (boots, hat, gloves, snow pants & coat)
 - Extra clothes
 - Shoes-we go outside daily
 - **Early Preschoolers (2 ½):**
 - Diapers and wipes
 - Standard crib sheet for their cot
 - Blanket for nap
 - Pillow if desired
 - "Lovey" for nap if desired
 - Snow gear for playing outside in the cold (boots, hat, gloves, snow pants & coat)
 - Extra clothes
 - Shoes-we go outside daily
 - Potty training items such as pull ups or training pants
 - **Preschoolers:**
 - Standard crib sheet for their cot
 - Blanket for nap
 - Pillow if desired
 - "Lovey" for nap if desired
 - Snow gear for playing outside in the cold (boots, hat, gloves, snow pants & coat)
 - Extra clothes
 - Shoes-we go outside daily
 - Potty training items such as pull ups or training pants if needed
 - Backpack
 - **Latchkey:**
 - At least one change of clothes
 - Socks and shoes
 - Backpack

Please label all items brought from home with your child's name (i.e., clothes, bottles, diapers, pacifiers, crib sheet, blanket, etc.) to prevent items from becoming misplaced or lost. We are not responsible for lost or damaged items. Sheets and soiled clothing will be sent home on an as-needed basis or at the end of the week for laundering and return to the center.

Cubbies & Hooks

Upon enrollment each child will be assigned a "cubby" and or set of hooks to store belongings. Cubbies are labeled with your child's name, letter link image and may include a photo. Please check your child's cubby on a daily basis for items that need to be taken home.

Lost & Found

You can look for lost items and bring found items to the Lost-and-found Box located at the end of the hallway on the far side of the main church sanctuary. Please note that we are not responsible for lost personal property.

Toys from Home

We request that you do not allow your child to bring toys from home into the center unless they are part of a show-and-tell activity. This helps ensure your child's things don't get lost or broken. Toys brought from home will be placed in your child's bag to be returned home. If your child will not leave the item in their bag, the toy will be moved to the office, and you will be notified to pick it up there.

NUTRITION

Foods Brought from Home

Due to the unique and individual dietary needs of infants we request that parents supply the foods and milk for their child until the age of 1 year.

For any children over the age of 1 year, we request that you do not bring food from home into our center.

Food brought from home is permitted under the following conditions:

- Birthday or celebration treats to be shared with other children must be store-bought, in its original package, and must be nut free.
- In the case of a severe allergy or multiple allergies where the center cannot meet the needs of the child's nutrition with substitutions from the menu.
- Children will not be allowed to share food provided by the child's family unless the food is intended for sharing with all of the children.
- Foods brought from home must be labeled with the child's name, date and contents.
- Leftover food will be discarded except for foods that do not require refrigeration and/or come in a commercially-wrapped package that was never opened.

Food Prepared for or at the Center

Food prepared for or at the center will be properly planned, prepared and portioned according to the Child and Adult Care Food Program (<http://www.fns.usda.gov/cnd/care/>) and the state requirements for food service. Copies of the monthly meal calendar are available on the main sign in counter by the entrance.

Food Allergies

If your child has a food allergy, you must notify us in writing so that we can make appropriate substitutions. The written notification should list appropriate food substitutions and must be updated at least annually.

Food allergies can be life threatening and each child with a food allergy should have an action plan for emergency care completed by the family physician.

Meal Time

Meal times are designed to be a positive social experience. Each child is given their own plate or meal tray along with silverware and their milk or water. All tableware and utensils are age appropriate and encourage independence. Teachers sit with the children at meal times to model and engage with them. Children are encouraged to participate in family style eating which includes serving themselves using appropriate utensils, passing the dishes to their classmates and asking peers for food items as they want more. Teachers encourage all children to sample from the full menu to encourage healthy eating choices.

A caregiver who is trained in first-aid for choking is present at all meals. Many items are diced for toddlers and some substitutions are made to meet their developmental needs. See the meal calendar for details regarding substitutions.

Infant Feedings

Infant feedings follow these procedures:

- Infants will be held for bottle-feeding until able to hold his or her own bottle. Bottles will never be propped.
- Infants are fed “on cue” to the extent possible (at least every 4 hours and usually not more than hourly) and by a consistent caregiver/teacher.
- Breastfeeding is supported by providing a place for nursing mothers to feed their babies. Expressed breast milk may be brought from home if frozen or kept cold during transit. All breast milk and formula shall be returned to the child’s home or discarded at the end of each day. Previously frozen, thawed breast milk must be used within 24 hours. Bottles must be clearly labeled with the child’s name and the date the milk was expressed. Frozen breast milk must be dated and may be kept in the freezer for the week. All supplies will be sent home at the end of each week.
- Breast milk and formula brought from home must be dated and labeled with the child’s first and last name, and contents.
- Labels on all milk/formula containers should be resistant to loss of the name and date/time when washing and handling.

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- Bottles must also include a plastic nipple cover to protect against contaminants.
 - Solid foods will only be introduced after a consultation with the child's family.
 - Care givers can never mix anything including medication into a child's bottle. Additionally, we cannot serve bottles that have other things mixed in.

Children 24 Months and Older

- No child shall go more than 4 hours without a meal or snack being provided.
- Children are encouraged to self-feed to the extent that they have the skills. Children are encouraged, but not forced to eat a variety of foods.
- Round, firm foods that pose a choking hazard for children less than 4 years of age are diced or quartered for consumption. If the item, such as hard candy, cannot be diced it is prohibited and will not be served.

School Aged Participants

- Before and after school child care participants will be offered breakfast in the morning and a light snack in the afternoon.
- For half day attendance or no school days, children will follow the same meal and snack schedule as the rest of the center.

HEALTH

Immunizations

Immunizations are required according to the current schedule recommended by the U.S. Public Health Services and the American Academy of Pediatrics, www.aap.org. We review records regularly, for updates of the recommended immunization schedule. Our state regulations regarding attendance of children who are not immunized due to religious or medical reasons are followed with a waiver from the health department on file. Waivers need to be updated annually. Unimmunized children are excluded during outbreaks of vaccine preventable illness as directed by the state health department.

Physicals

Routine physicals are required according to the current recommendations of the American Academy of Pediatrics, www.aap.org. A copy of your child's physical/health appraisal should be received before your child begins the program. Families are responsible for assuring that their child's physicals are kept up-to-date and that a copy of the results of the child's health assessment is given to the program. An updated physical/health appraisal form is required each year until the child moves to kindergarten.

Parents of school aged children are required to complete an annual health statement.

Illness

We understand that it is difficult for a family member to leave or miss work, but to protect other children; you may not bring a sick child to the center. The center has the right to refuse a child who appears ill. You will be called and asked to pick up your child if your child exhibits any of the following symptoms. This is not an all-inclusive list. We will try to keep your child comfortable, but he/she will be excluded from all activities until you arrive.

- Illness that prevents your child from participating in activities.
- Illness that results in greater need for care than we can provide.
- Illness that poses a risk of spread of harmful diseases to others.
- Fever (100° or higher if a head or ear thermometer were used-or after adding a degree if an under-arm thermometer was used).
- Diarrhea – stools with blood or mucus, and/or uncontrolled, unformed stools that cannot be contained in a diaper/underwear or toilet.
- Vomiting
- Mouth sores caused by drooling.
- Rash with fever, unless a physician has determined it is not a communicable disease.
- Pink or red conjunctiva with white or yellow eye discharge, until on antibiotics for 24 hours.
- Impetigo, until 24 hours after treatment.
- Strep throat, until 24 hours after treatment.
- Head lice, until treatment and all nits are removed. Freedom Child Development Center is a nit free facility.
- Scabies, until 24 hours after treatment.
- Chickenpox, until all lesions have dried and crusted.
- Pertussis (Whooping Cough), until 5 days of antibiotics.
- Hepatitis A virus, until one week after immune globulin has been administered.
- Tuberculosis, until a health professional indicates the child is not infectious.
- Rubella, until 6 days after the rash appears.
- Mumps, until 5 days after onset of parotid gland swelling.
- Measles, until 4 days after onset of rash.
- Has a physician or other health professionals written order that child be separated from other children.

Children who have been ill may return when:

- They are free of fever, vomiting and diarrhea for 24 hours.
- They have been treated with an antibiotic for 24 hours.
- If diagnosed with COVID-19, have followed all current guidelines and protocols regarding quarantine periods.
- They are able to participate comfortably in all usual activities.
- They are free of open, oozing skin conditions and drooling (not related to teething) unless:
 - The child's physician signs a note stating that the child's condition is not contagious, and;

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- The involved areas can be covered by a bandage without seepage or drainage through the bandage.
 - If a child had a reportable communicable disease, a physician's note stating that the child is no longer contagious and may return to our care is required.
 - Or after being seen by a physician accompanied by a doctor's note to return.

Allergy Prevention

Families are expected to notify us regarding children's food and environmental allergies. Families of children with diagnosed allergies are required to provide us a letter detailing the child's symptoms, reactions, treatments and care. A list of the children's allergies will be posted in their classrooms and the kitchen. We are trained to familiarize ourselves and consult the list to avoid the potential of exposing children to substances to which they have known allergies.

Medications

Prescription medications require a medication form signed by the family and a written order from the child's physician. The label on the medication meets this requirement. The medication must include your child's name, dosage, current date (cannot be expired), frequency, and the name and phone number of the physician. All medications must be in the original container (you may request pharmacies to fill your prescription in two labeled bottles). Please specify the dosage and time(s) to be administered for each medication. Each dose administered will be recorded on the medication form.

Non-prescription medications require written permission, a medication form and instructions signed by the child's family. The written permission must include your child's name, dosage, current date, frequency, and all medications must be in the original container. Non-prescription medication should not be administered for more than a 3-day period unless a written order by the physician is received.

Fever reducing medication cannot be administered by Freedom Child Development Center staff if a fever or temperature over 98.6 degrees is present. For teething discomfort, headaches, or any other pain relieving need is present, staff will check for a temp before administering the medication. If the medication cannot be administered due to a present fever, it will be documented and the family will be contacted.

Non-prescription topical ointments (e.g., diaper cream or teething gel), sunscreen and/or insect repellent require a note signed by the child's family specifying frequency and dosage to be administered as well as the length of time the authorization is valid which cannot exceed 12 months. A new signed form will be required annually.

Freedom Child Development Center encourages all families to provide sunscreen for their child. Staff will help to apply sunscreen to prevent burning. Sunscreen will be stored on site in a location out of the reach of the children. Please label all sunscreen bottles with your child's first and last name. Sunscreen will be sent home with the child at the end of the summer season.

Communicable Diseases

When an enrolled child or an employee of the center has a (suspected) reportable disease, it is our legal responsibility to notify the local Health Department. We will take care to notify families about exposure so children can receive preventive treatments.

Included among the reportable illnesses are the following:

- Bacterial Meningitis
- Botulism
- Chicken Pox
- COVID-19
- Diphtheria
- Hemophilus Influenza (invasive)
- Measles (including suspect)
- Meningococcal Infection (invasive)
- Poliomyelitis (including suspect)
- Rabies (human only)
- Rubella Congenital and Non-congenital (including suspect)
- Tetanus (including suspect)
- H1N1 Virus
- Any cluster/outbreak of illness
- Tuberculosis

SAFETY

Clothing

Please dress your child in practical clothing that allows for freedom of movement and is appropriate for the weather. Your child will be involved in a variety of activities including: painting, outdoor play, sand, weather, and other sensory activities. Our playground is used as an extension of the center, and daily programs are conducted outside whenever weather permits.

One particular aspect of concern is the risk associated with children's clothing that may become entangled with climbing or sliding equipment that could lead to choking or other serious harm. Keep in mind that drawstrings can pose a risk for entanglement, and it is advised that they be removed.

Shoes are required for any walking child at all times. Non walking infants may wear socks, booties or slippers.

Winter weather clothing such as boots, snow pants, gloves and a hat are required for safe outdoor play.

Extreme Weather and Outdoor Play

Outdoor play will not occur if the outside temperature is greater than a feels like temperature of 100°F or less than a feels like temperature of 20°F degrees. Outdoor

play may occur during a light sprinkle of rain or snowfall but will cease if lightning or sleet is present.

Communal Water-Play

Communal, unsupervised water play is prohibited. Supervised children are permitted to engage in water-play. Precautions are taken to ensure that communal water-play does not spread communicable infectious disease. Water play will occur for Water Wednesdays through the summer months of June-August.

Injuries

Safety is a major concern in childcare and so daily safety inspections are completed inside and outside the center area in order to prevent injuries. First aid will be administered by a trained caregiver in the event that your child sustains a minor injury (e.g., scraped knee). You will receive an incident report outlining the incident and course of action taken. If the injury produces any type of swelling or needs medical attention, you will be contacted immediately. Each classroom is equipped with a first aid kit meeting the state regulations.

In the event of a serious medical emergency, the child will be taken to the hospital immediately by ambulance, while we will try to contact you or an emergency contact.

Biting

Biting is a normal stage of development that is common among infants and toddlers – and sometimes even among preschoolers. It is something that most young children will try at least once.

When biting happens, our response will be to care for and help the child who was bitten and to help the biter learn a more appropriate behavior. Our focus will not be on punishment for biting, but on effective behaviors that address the specific reason for biting.

Notes will be written to the family of the child who was bitten and the biter's family. We will work together with the families of each to keep them informed and to develop strategies for change.

Respectful Behavior

All children and families will be treated with respect and dignity. In return, we expect the same from all of our families. We will not tolerate hostile or aggressive behavior or language. If this occurs, we reserve the right to ask you to control your behavior or to remove your children from our care.

Smoking

The poisons in secondhand smoke are especially harmful to infants and young children's developing bodies, therefore the indoor and outdoor center environment and vehicles used by the center are non-smoking areas at all times. The use of tobacco in any form is prohibited on the center's premises.

Prohibited Substances

The use of alcohol or illegal drugs is prohibited on the center's premises. Possession of illegal substances or unauthorized potentially toxic substances is prohibited.

Any adult who appears to be inebriated, intoxicated, or otherwise under the influence of mind-altering or polluting substances is required to leave the premises immediately. Children will not be released to any individual under the influence of drugs or alcohol.

Dangerous Weapons

A dangerous weapon is a gun, knife, razor, or any other object, which by the manner it is used or intended to be used, is capable of inflicting bodily harm. Families, children, or guests (other than law enforcement officers) possessing a dangerous weapon will not be permitted onto the premises.

In cases that clearly involve a gun, or any other weapon on our premises, the police will be called, and the individual(s) involved will be immediately removed from the premises. This policy applies to visible or concealed weapons.

Child Custody

Without a court document, both parents/guardians have equal rights to custody. We are legally bound to respect the wishes of the parent/guardian with legal custody based on a certified copy of the most recent court order, active restraining order, or court-ordered visitation schedule. We will not accept the responsibility of deciding which parent/guardian has legal custody where there is no court documentation.

Suspected Child Abuse

We are required by law to report all observations of child abuse or neglect cases to the appropriate state authorities if we have reasonable cause to believe or suspect a child is suffering from abuse or neglect or is in danger of abuse or neglect, no matter where the abuse might have occurred. The child protective service agency will determine appropriate action and may conduct an investigation. It then becomes the role of the agency to determine if the report is substantiated and to work with the family to ensure the child's needs are met. Our center will cooperate fully with any investigation and will maintain confidentiality concerning any report of child abuse or neglect.

EMERGENCIES

Lost or Missing Child

In the unlikely event that a child becomes lost or separated from a group, all available staff will search for the child. If the child is not located within 10 minutes, the family and the police will be notified.

Fire Safety

Our center is fully equipped with fire alarms, pull stations, sprinkler systems, kitchen fire retardant system, emergency lights, portable cribs for evacuation and emergency bag kits.

Our fire evacuation plan is reviewed with the children and staff on a quarterly basis.

Emergency Transportation

In the event your child needs to be transported due to a medical emergency, if no other authorized person can be contacted and the need for transportation is essential, an ambulance will be called for transportation. A proper escort will accompany and remain with the child until a family member or emergency contact arrives.

Family Handbook Acknowledgement

Please sign this acknowledgement, detach it from the handbook, and return it to the center prior to enrollment.

This handbook may be updated from time-to-time, and notice will be provided as updates are implemented.

Thank you for your acknowledging the policies and procedures we have established for the safety and welfare of all children in our care. We look forward to getting to know you and your family.

I have received the Freedom Child Development Center Family Handbook, and I have reviewed the family handbook with a member of the Freedom Child Development Center staff. It is my responsibility to understand and familiarize myself the Family Handbook and to ask center management for clarification of any policy, procedure or information contained in the Freedom Child Development Center Family Handbook that I do not understand.

Recipient Signature

Date

Center Staff Signature

Date

