



Stepping Stones Employee Handbook

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## **1. Introduction**

1.1 Welcome to Stepping Stones Learning Center! We are thrilled to have you as a new member of our family. You have an important role in this childcare center, and we hope for a great future for you continuing your career here at Stepping Stones Learning Center. Please read this employee handbook from start to finish as this is your bible for our center.

1.2 Mission- The mission at Stepping Stones Learning Center is to provide every child with a clean, comfortable environment where they can play and learn with the guidance and loving care as they progress through their childhood. We are a valuable learning tool for these children, and we are the key to their future.

1.3 Philosophy- Our philosophy behind our mission is to provide a safe, comfortable, warm, and caring environment for children to play and learn. We will allow the children to experiment through creative play, small and large motor exercises, art, music, math, and science. We will do our best to assist compassion for others. We strive to encourage creativity, social skills and to create well-rounded children. Staff will have opportunities at each staff meeting to voice their concerns and ideas.

1.4 Changes in Policies- This manual supersedes all previous employee manuals and memos. While every effort is made to keep the contents of this document current, Stepping Stones Learning Center reserves the right to modify, suspend, or terminate any of the policies, procedures, and/or benefits described in the manual with or without prior notice to employees.

## **2. Time off and Benefits**

2.1 Military Reserves or National Guard Leave of Absence- Employees who serve in the U.S. military organizations or state militia groups such as the National Guard may take the necessary time off to fulfill this obligation and will retain all of their legal rights for continued employment with Stepping Stones Learning Center under existing laws.

2.2 Family/Medical Leave of Absence- Occasionally, for medical, personal, or other reasons employees may need to be temporarily released from the duties of their job with

Stepping Stones Learning Center. It is the policy of the center to allow its employees to apply for and be considered for certain specific leaves of absence. All requests for leaves of absence should be submitted in writing to management.

2.3 Extended Disability Leave- If a period of disability continues beyond the 12 weeks provided within the Family/Medical leaves of absence section, an employee may apply, in writing, for an extended disability leave through an agency.

2.4 Uniformed Services Employment and Reemployment- As an equal opportunity employer, Stepping Stones Learning Center is committed to providing the basic employment and reemployment services and support as set forth in the Uniformed Services Employment and Reemployment Act of 1994 (USERRA).

2.5 Personal Leaves of Absence- In special circumstances, Stepping Stones Learning Center may grant a leave of Personal Reasons, but never for taking employment elsewhere or becoming self-employed. Personal leave of absence must be requested in writing and are subject to the discretion of management and will be unpaid.

2.6 Jury Duty- Stepping Stones Learning Center is committed to supporting the communities in which the center operates, including supporting employees in fulfilling their responsibilities to serve as jurors whenever it is possible. When an employee receives notification regarding upcoming jury duty, it is their responsibility to notify their direct supervisor within one business day of receiving the notice. When called in for Jury Duty, you will not be compensated for that time.

2.7 Bereavement Leave- Generally, an employee shall be entitled to unpaid Bereavement Leave upon the death of a blood and non-blood immediate families.

2.8 Vacation time/Request for time off/PTO- The employee must complete one full year of employment before he/she is eligible for vacation time. Vacation pays given to all employees. Employees of Stepping Stones Learning Center will receive the following vacation benefits after one year of employment:

- One Year of Employment 24 hours paid.
- Two Years of Employment:48 hours paid.

- Three Years of Employment: 72 hours paid.
- Four Years of Employment: 96 hours paid.
- Five Years of Employment: 120 hours paid.

Vacation days can roll over to the new year. The max for vacation is 120 hours.

All vacation time must be cleared and agreed upon by the center's director two weeks in advance. A request for PTO can be denied.

Any staff member employed by Stepping Stones Learning Center may request time off without pay, provided the time off requested is cleared and agreed upon by the center's director.

2.9 Worker Compensation- All Stepping Stones Learning Center employees are entitled to Workers Compensation benefits paid by Stepping Stones Learning Center. This coverage is automatic and immediate and protects employees from work-related injury or illness, Workers Compensation insurance pays his or her medical bills and provides a portion of this or her income until he or she can return to work.

### 3. Job Description

#### 3.1 Director/Administrator

- 1) The supervision of the planning and implementation of the center's programs for children
  - a. Lesson plans
  - b. All policies
- 2) The supervision of staff at the center
  - a. Break periods
  - b. Early release if possible
- 3) Maintain and update staff records.
- 4) Staff meetings (One Saturday a Month)
  - a. Meeting minutes distributed to staff.
  - b. Agenda for meeting
- 5) Orientation and continuing education for the staff
  - a. One week of orientation
  - b. Training in all areas
  - c. Advertise continuing education opportunities.
- 6) Scheduling of children and staff
  - a. Distribute schedules to staff.
  - b. Combine schedules of children & meal counts

- c. Distribute schedules to rooms.
  - d. Collect schedules on a weekly basis.
- 7) Maintaining licensing guidelines (ratios, environment, etc.)
  - 8) Weekly fire tests, monthly tornado/fire drills
    - a. Documentation
  - 9) Relay messages to staff from parents
  - 10) Help staff when guidance is needed.
  - 11) Check payment box daily, make copies of checks.
  - 12) Fill in for teachers when needed.
    - a. Breaks
    - b. Call-ins
    - c. Vacation days
  - 13) Maintain professional relationships with parents and co-workers.
  - 14) Give tours to parents and officials.
  - 15) Enroll children.
  - 16) Always have a smile, greet parents and co-workers warmly
  - 17) Listen and address any issues that arise.
  - 18) Answer phone, Stepping Stones Learning Center, this is \_\_\_ how may I help you?
  - 19) Maintain professional attitude and appearance.

### 3.2 Assistant Director

- 1) The supervision of the planning and implementation of the center's programs for children
  - a. Lesson plans
  - b. All policies
- 2) The Supervision of staff at the center
  - a. Break Periods
  - b. Early release if possible
  - c. Maintain and update staff records.
- 3) Staff meetings (last Tuesday of the month)
  - a. Meeting minutes distributed to staff.
  - b. Agenda for meeting
- 4) Orientation and continuing education for all staff
  - a. One week of orientation
  - b. Training in all areas
  - c. Advertise continuing education.
- 5) Scheduling of children & staff
  - a. Distribute schedules to staff.
  - b. Combine schedules of children and meal counts
  - c. Distribute children's schedules on a weekly basis.

- d. Collect schedules on a weekly basis for director/admin.
- 6) Maintaining licensing guidelines (ratios, environment, etc.)
  - 7) Weekly fire tests, tornado/fire drills
    - a. Documentation
  - 8) Help staff when guidance is needed.
  - 9) Help director/admin with jobs.
  - 10) Check payment box daily, make copies of checks and submit to director/admin.
  - 11) Fill-in for teachers when needed.
    - a. Breaks
    - b. Call-ins
    - c. Vacation
  - 12) Maintain professional relationships with parents and co-workers.
  - 13) Give tours to parents and other officials.
  - 14) Enroll children.
  - 15) Always smile.
  - 16) Listen and address any issues that may arise.
  - 17) Don't hesitate to ask questions.
  - 18) Relay messages or issues to director/admin
  - 19) Answer phone, Stepping Stones Learning Center, this is \_\_\_\_ how may I help you?
  - 20) Maintain a professional attitude and appearance.
  - 21) Cleaning

### 3.3 Lead Teacher

- 1) Plan and execute appropriate activities for the children each day in art, music, language, science, math, multicultural experiences, as well as in motor development.
- 2) Observing and evaluating each child's progress.
- 3) Alert the director/admin when supplies are running low, or when toys or equipment need repair.
- 4) Work cooperatively and respectfully with co-workers and parents
- 5) Be available for parent conferences twice a year: March and October
- 6) Attend monthly staff meetings and parent functions.
- 7) Assist parents in drop-off and pick-up with belongings and dressing.
- 8) Notify director/admin in the event of absence and find replacement.
  - a. Doctors note required for illness.
- 9) Submit lesson plans two weeks in advance to director/admin every Thursday.
- 10) Follow center policies and licensing procedures.
- 11) Get down to children's level and interact and play.
- 12) Assist children in daily activities.
  - a. Tooth brushing, toileting, hand washing, etc.

- 13) Be patient with children, calm and never raise your voice.
- 14) Document all medications and all accidents in medical logbook
- 15) Fill out daily activities for children using the ProCare Connect app on the tablets located in each classroom.
- 16) Clean and sanitize toys at nap time and when closing out a classroom.
- 17) Take out garbage.
- 18) Assist co-workers with any needs daily.
- 19) Keep a positive attitude.
- 20) Complete food and infant meal sheets immediately after meal
- 21) Sign children in and out immediately upon arrival and departure.
- 22) Have parents sign attendance reports on the last day of the week the child is attending.
- 23) Delegate responsibilities to teacher assistant in a cooperative manner
- 24) Inform director/admin of ratio changes or children attending without prior notice.

#### 3.4 Assistant Teacher

- 1) Assist the teacher in the supervision of the children, preparation of materials, and observation of children. The teacher assistant's activities each day will be at the discretion of the lead teacher.
- 2) Handle final clean-up at the end of the day.
- 3) Alert director/admin when supplies are running low or when toys or equipment need repair.
- 4) Assist the teacher in planning and executing age-appropriate activities for the children each week in science, math, art, and multicultural experiences.
- 5) Assist the teacher with observing and evaluating each child's progress.
- 6) Work cooperatively and respectfully with staff members and parents
- 7) Assist parents in drop off and pick up belongings and dressing.
- 8) Be available for parent conferences twice a year: March and October
- 9) Attend monthly staff meetings and parent functions!
- 10) Notify director/admin in the event of an absence and find a replacement.
- 11) Eat lunch with children.
- 12) Follow center policies and licensing procedures.
- 13) Get down and interact with the children at their level.
- 14) Document all medications and all accidents/injuries in medical book
- 15) Assist children in daily activities.
- 16) Be patient, calm and never raise your voice.
- 17) Fill out daily activities for children in the ProCare app on classroom tablets.
- 18) Clean and sanitize toys at nap time and when closing out a classroom.
- 19) Take garbage out.
- 20) Assist co-workers with any needs daily.

- 21) Keep a positive attitude.
- 22) Complete food and infant meal sheets immediately after meal
- 23) Sign children in and out immediately after arrival and departure
- 24) Have parents sign attendance reports on the last day of the week the child is attending.
- 25) Inform director/admin of ratio changes or child attending without prior notice.

#### 3.5 Cook

- 1) Prepare a nutritious breakfast, lunch, pm snack, and dinner each day and deliver to each classroom.
- 2) Plan menus, and order appropriate quantities of food
- 3) Keep records of menus, recipes and quantities required.
- 4) Keep posted records of each child's allergies and consider them in meal planning.
- 5) Wash and sterilize all dishes and utensils according to proper sanitation procedures (4 step process; wash, rinse, sanitize, air dry)
- 6) Keep the kitchen area clean.
- 7) Help staff with any mealtime needs and routines.
- 8) Follow CACFP standards.

#### 3.6 Structure of employees

- Director/Administrator
- Assistant Director
- Lead Teacher
- Teacher
- Assistant Teacher
- Cook

#### 3.7 Pay Scale

- All pay is subject to experience, education, and qualifications.

#### 3.8 Training and Orientation

Upon hire, each new employee of Stepping Stones Learning Center will be allowed time to read the Employee Handbook at orientation. This will include policies and procedures and the training packet. They will be required to review each and become familiar with all policies and procedures at Stepping Stones Learning Center. The Employee handbook requires a signature, verifying that they have read and understand the book and their responsibilities. They will also be required to review and understand State Licensing

rules and how those rules apply to their position. Salary scales and benefit schedules are also made available to staff upon hire and request. (Reference to 3.7 and 2.8)

The first week of employment at Stepping Stones Learning Center will be the new teacher's orientation period. During this week, the director/admin will ensure that the new staff person is oriented in the following areas:

- Stepping Stones Learning Center policies
- Licensing Rules and Regulations
- Center contingency plans including fire and tornado evacuation plans and the operation of fire extinguishers.
- First-Aid procedures
- Job descriptions as they relate to their job description.
- Training in the recognition of childhood illnesses and infectious disease control including hand washing procedures and universal precautions for handling body fluids.
- Schedule of activities of the Stepping Stones Learning Center
- Review of child abuse and neglect laws and center reporting procedures
- The procedure for ensuring that all child care workers know the children assigned to their care and their whereabouts at all times.
- Child management techniques
- Procedure for sharing and keeping confidential information related to a child's special health care needs including any physical, emotional, social, and/or cognitive disabilities with any child care worker who may be assigned to care for that child throughout the day.
- Review of procedures to reduce the risk of sudden infant death syndrome (SIDS) prior to employees or volunteers first day of work.
- The procedure to contact a parent if a child is absent from the center without proper notification from the parent.
- Information on any special needs a child enrolled in the center may have and the plan for how those needs will be met and kept confidential.
- Emergency training including first aid, CPR, AED
- Procedure for tracking transported children.

During their orientation, every employee of Stepping Stones Learning Center will be taught the importance of sanitizing toys and equipment, wearing gloves, hand washing, and administering first aid to an injured child (including proper training as it relates to bleeding child). Orientation will be documented on a form provided by licensing.

- Training packets will be provided upon hire.

#### **4. Compensation/Timekeeping Policies/Group Health and Related Benefits**

##### **4.1 Employee Continuing Education**

Upon hire, employees are asked to submit any credits or coursework already obtained, and/or are enrolled in classes that train individuals to the licensing state equivalent. These courses include training that prepares teachers to work with children who have special needs.

All employees of Stepping Stones Learning Center are required in the state of Wisconsin to participate in continuing education. All employees that work more than 20 hours a week are required to provide themselves with 25 hours per year, and an employee that works less than 20 per week needs to have 15 hours per year. Stepping Stones Learning Center will provide some continuing education hours at monthly staff meetings. Employees will not be compensated for any continuing education costs or mileage, outside of the staff meeting. Continuing education shall include, but is not limited to the following:

- Formal courses, resulting in credits or continuing education units.
- Workshops or conferences concerning childhood education.
- Training in emergency procedures including CPR and AED

##### **4.2 Timekeeping Procedures**

By law, Stepping Stones Learning Center is obligated to keep accurate records of the time worked by employees. Each employee must punch in and out at the appropriate time each day, using Homebase tablet located next to the front office, as well as written documentation on classroom attendance. You are allowed to clock in 5 minutes before your scheduled shift and you are allowed 15 minutes after being dismissed for the day. If there is a problem with your timecard you must inform the director/admin immediately. Timecards that do not reflect this policy will be reviewed by the director and altered based on evidence. Hours are submitted each Monday, for the previous week, and cannot be altered by employee.

##### **4.3 Overtime**

Overtime compensation is paid to non-exempt employees in accordance with federal and state wage and hour restrictions. All overtime work performed must receive prior authorization from the director/admin.

##### **4.4 Payroll and Paydays**

The frequency of Stepping Stones Learning Center payroll distribution for all employees, (exempt or non-exempt) is paid bi-weekly on or by the Friday following the end of the pay week. Checks will be distributed by 5:00pm, no later.

#### 4.5 Performance and Salary Reviews

Stepping Stones Learning Center wants to help employees succeed in their jobs and to grow. In an effort to support this growth and success, we have an annual review process for providing formal performance feedback. Feedback includes a performance evaluation and a 360-degree assessment. Depending on the employee anniversary date, the performance review is held during either the January or the June review cycle.

Salary/wage reviews typically occur in conjunction with the annual performance review process. Staff will be required to complete a self-evaluation prior to their annual review. The calculation and implementation of changes in base salary/wage depend on both company and personal performance and will typically occur in either January or July, whichever most closely follows the review cycle.

Three factors will be taken into consideration for raises. These factors include, but are not limited to, performance, attendance, and continuing education. Based off of these factors, a raise increase will be offered between 1% and 5% an hour, based off of annual reviews and kept confidential.

Once employed for 90 days, staff members will meet with director/admin for a performance review.

#### 4.6 Opportunities for Advancement: Progression and Promotion

Stepping Stones Learning Center would like to provide employees with every opportunity for advancing to other positions or opportunities within the company. Approval of progression moves, or promotions depends largely upon training, experience, work record, and business need. However, Stepping Stones Learning Center reserves the right to look outside the company for potential employees as well. In the event that a position opens up, the position will be posted on the UWEC job board, Facebook job board, Indeed and Homebase.

#### 4.7 Workers Compensation

All employees are entitled to workers compensation benefits paid by Stepping Stones Learning Center. This coverage is automatic and immediate and protects employees from work-related injury or illness. If an employee cannot work due to a work-related injury or illness, workers compensation insurance pays his or her medical bills and provides a portion of his or her income until he or she can return to work.

#### 4.8 Unemployment Compensation

Unemployment compensation is designed to provide a temporary income for those who are out of work through no fault of their own. Depending upon the circumstances, employees may be eligible for unemployment compensation upon termination of employment with Stepping Stones Learning Center. The division of unemployment insurance of each states department of labor determines eligibility for unemployment compensation. Stepping Stones Learning Center pays the entire cost of this insurance program.

#### 4.9 Social Security

The United States Government operates a system of mandated insurance known as Social Security. As a wage earner, employees are required by law to contribute a set number of weekly wages to the trust fund from which benefits are paid. As employer, Stepping Stones Learning Center is required to deduct this amount from each paycheck an employee contribution dollar for dollar, thereby paying one-half of the cost of employee Social Security benefits.

#### 4.10 Education Benefits

Stepping Stones Learning Center offers all of their fulltime employees the option to utilize a TEACH scholarship through WECA. The employee must work for the center for 3 months at a full-time rate to qualify for this benefit.

### 5. Policies and Procedures

#### 5.1 Equal Employment Opportunities

Stepping Stones Learning Center is an equal employment opportunity employer. Employment decisions are based on merit and business needs, and not on race, color, citizenship status, national origins, ancestry, gender, sexual orientation, age, weight, religion, creed, physical or mental disability, marital status, veteran status, political affiliation, or any other factor protected by the law.

#### 5.2 Affirmative Action/Diversity

Stepping Stones Learning Center is committed to affirmative action's that will build on the strengths of our current workforce and continually enhance the diversity of the organization. Our actions include, but are not limited to, the following:

- Monthly employee meetings
- Opportunities for advance
- Continuing Education

### 5.3 Americans with Disabilities Act

It is the policy of Stepping Stones Learning Center to comply with all the relevant and applicable provisions of the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA). We do not discriminate against any qualified employees or job applicant with respect to any terms, privileges, or conditions of employment because of a person's physical or mental disability.

### 5.4 Immigration Law Compliance

All offers of employment are contingent on verification of the candidates right to work in the United States. On the first day of work, every new employee will be asked to provide original documents verifying his or her right to work and, as required by federal law, to sign Federal Form I-9, Employment Eligibility Verification Form.

### 5.5 Employee Background Check

Once employment is made official, each employee of Stepping Stones Learning Center must submit to a fingerprint scan through Field Print. Stepping Stones Learning Center will also do a comprehensive background check that may consist of prior employment verification, professional reference checks, education confirmation, and background information disclosure. Background checks will be conducted annually and will be completed for any state that the employee has lived in the last five (5) years.

### 5.6 Anniversary Date

The first day an employee reports to work is his or her official anniversary date. This anniversary date is used to compute the following benefits. All benefits will begin after 1 year of employment.

- Vacation time
- Raises (annual based off of date of hire-January/July)
- Other

### 5.7 Personal Records and Administration

The task of handling personnel records and related administration functions at Stepping Stones Learning Center has been assigned to administrator. Personnel files will be kept confidential at all times and include some or all of the following documents:

- Original application
- Tax withholding form (W-4)
- Staff record
- I-9
- Background information disclosure
- New hire reporting

- Orientation checklist
- Staff health report
- Criminal background check (for employees over the age of 18)

Other information kept in the employees file will include, but is not limited to, employee reviews, corrective action notices, copies of continuing education certificates, changes to the employee's address, vacation requests, and any other communication between the employee and the management of Stepping Stones Learning Center.

### 5.8 Change of Personal Data

Any change in an employee's name, address, telephone number, marital status, dependents, or insurance beneficiaries, or a change in the number of tax withholding exemptions, needs to be reported in writing without delay to the director/admin.

### 5.9 Safety

The safety of the health of employees is a priority. Stepping Stones Learning Center makes every effort to comply with all federal state workplace safety requirements. The center's workplace safety rules and regulations are the following.

- Child care workers shall be free of non-classroom duties when they are counted in meeting the staff-to-child ratios.
- Children of staff who attend the center and who are on the premises for supervision and care shall be included in determining group size and staff-to-child ratios.
- Resources and referrals are available upon request for any staff dealing with wellness prevention, treatment of depression, and stress management.

Each employee is expected to obey safety rules and exercise caution and common sense in all work activities.

### 5.10 Responsibilities and Qualification of Staff

- Competency- A child care worker, including the center administrator, center director, child care teachers, assistant teachers, and volunteers counted in the staff to child ratio shall be physically, mentally, and emotionally able to provide responsible care for all children including children with disabilities.
- Abusive Head Trauma training (DCF. 251.04 (5)(a)(7)- Except for a volunteer who is not counted in staff-to-child ratios, each child care worker including the administrator, center director, teachers, assistant teachers, and substitutes who provide care and supervision to children under 5 years of age shall receive department-approved training in shaken baby syndrome and impacted babies and appropriate ways to manage crying, fussing or distraught children. The training shall be completed by one of the following methods:



- 1) Complete the department-approved, in-person training on shaken baby syndrome prevention and impacted babies before the date on which the child care worker begins to work with children under age 5 years.
- 2) View a department-approved video or complete a department-approved, web-based course on shaken baby syndrome prevention before the date on which the child care worker begins to work with children under age 5 years and complete a department-approved, in-person training within 6 months of beginning to work with children under age 5.

Note: Department-approved training in shaken baby syndrome prevention is included in the department approved non-credit courses called *Introduction to the Child Care Profession* and *Fundamentals of Infant and Toddler* If the course was taken after 7/01/01. Information on department-approved training in shaken baby syndrome is available from the Child Care Information Center at 800-362-7353

- Cardiopulmonary resuscitation training (CPR) (DCF 251.05 (1) (c)- all employees in regular contact with children shall obtain and maintain a current certificate of completion for infant and child cardiopulmonary resuscitation and automated external defibrillator use from an agency approved by the department within 6 months after beginning to work with children. Volunteers included in determining staff-to child ratios shall obtain a certificate of completion in infant and child cardiopulmonary resuscitation after volunteering for 240 hours. The time spent obtaining or renewing cardiopulmonary resuscitation training may be counted towards the required continuing education hours. Stepping Stones Learning Center uses [www.procp.org](http://www.procp.org) for CPR certification. CPR costs are to be paid by the employee.

5.11 Health examination (DCF 250.04 (5)(e) and DCF 251.05 (1)(L1)

1. Except as provided under subd. 2., persons who work directly with children, except volunteers, shall have a health examination within 12 months before beginning work at the center or within 30 days of employment. The results of the examination shall be stated on a form provided by the department. The report shall be dated and signed by a licensed physician, physician assistant, or health check provider; the report shall indicate all of the following:
  - a. That the person is free from illness detrimental to children including tuberculosis.
  - b. That the person is physically able to work with children.

Note: The department's form, Staff Health Report- Child Care Provider, is used for recording physical examination information.

2. The health examination requirement under subd. 1. Does not apply to a person who requests an examination from the department in writing. The exemption is granted

based on adherence to religious belief in exclusive use of prayer or spiritual means for healing in accordance with a bona fide religious sect or denomination.

3. No licensee, employee, volunteer, visitor, or parent with symptoms of serious illness or a communicable disease transmitted through normal contact reportable under Ch. DHS 145 which presents a safety or health risk to children may be in contact with the children in care.
4. A) No licensee, employee, volunteer, visitor, or parent whose behavior gives reasonable concern for the safety of children may be in contact with the children in care of the center.  
B) The department may require licensee, employee, or other person in contact with the children whose behavior gives reasonable concern for the safety of children to submit to an examination by a licensed mental health professional as a condition of licensure or employment.
5. No person with a health history of typhoid, paratyphoid, dysentery, or other diarrheal disease may work in a center until it is determined by appropriate tests that the person is not a carrier of the disease.

5.12 Supervision

- At least one childcare teacher shall supervise each group of children.
  - Mixed age group classrooms will have one staff member per group of children. Preschool/Kindergarten vs School age
- Assistant childcare teachers who have completed the training required for the position may provide supervision to children in full daycare centers for opening and closing hours, not to exceed the first 2 hours of center operation.
- Each child shall be closely supervised by a childcare worker.
- A childcare worker may not provide care to children at the center for more than 10 hours in any 24-hour period.
- A child may not be in care for more than 14 hours in any 24-hour period.
- The center shall implement a procedure to ensure that the number and names of children in care are known to assigned childcare workers at all times.
- A child may not be released to any person who has not been previously authorized by the parent.

5.13 Staffing and grouping

- The maximum number of children in a group may not exceed the number specified in Table 46.05-D
- The ratio of child care workers to children may not be less than minimum number of child care workers to children specified in Table 4605-D

- Our mixed-age classroom will have appropriate staffing to meet the development needs of the children attending.

**Maximum Group Size and Minimum Number of Child Care Workers in Group Child Care Centers**

Age of Children Minimum Number of Child	Minimum Number of Child Care Workers to Children	Maximum Number of Children in a Group
0-2	1:4	8
2-2 ½	1:6	12
2 ½-3	1:8	16
3-4	1:10	20
4-5	1:13	24
5-6	1:17	34
6-12	1:18	36

- When 8 or fewer children are present in a center, there shall be a second adult available within 5 minutes for emergencies. The center shall maintain a signed and dated statement from that person, including address and telephone number, certifying that the person is available and agrees to serve if needed.
- Maximum group size does not apply to field trips, outdoor play areas, pools, and area of the center reserved exclusively for eating, but staff-to-child ratios shall be maintained in those settings.
- During naptime, an adjustment in group size and staff-to-child ratios in table 46.05-D may be made as follows:
  - One child care worker shall be within sight or sound of each group of sleeping children. If at least one child is awake, sight and sound supervision of awake children is required.
  - Adult to child ratios shall be maintained in the center during naptime.
  - The maximum group, the staff-to-child ratio shall be adjusted on a prorated basis, according to age.
- When there is a mixed age group, the staff-to-child shall be adjusted on a prorated basis, according to age.  
 Note: The licensee may use the Departments form CFS-0078, Child Care Staff-Child Ratio Worksheet-Group Child Care Centers. To adjust the staff-to-child-ratio.  
 Information on how to obtain the Departments form is in Appendix E
- When infants and toddlers are part of a mixed age group, the size of the group may not exceed 8.

- When the group of children is a mixed age group of children 2 years and older, the group size shall be determined by the number of children that are cared for by 2 child care workers as determined by the staff-to-child requirements under par.
- In a center with 9 or more children present, there shall be at least 2 adults available in the center at all times. At least one of the adults shall be a child care worker directly involved in the supervision and care of the children.
- When 9 or more children are on a field trip there shall be at least 2 adults accompanying the children and the staff-to-child ratios in Table 46.05-D shall be maintained. At least one of the adults shall be a child care teacher.
- Support staff, such as clerical, housekeeping, and food service staff, may only be considered in determining the staff-to-child ratios.
  - During those hours when they give full attention to the area and supervision of the children.
  - If they meet the qualifications for child workers (L) Child Care workers shall be free of non-classroom duties when they are counting in meeting the staff-to-child ratios.
- Children of staff who attend the center and who are on the premises for supervision and care shall be included in determining group size and staff-to-child ratios.
- If a parent attempts to drop off their child without proper authorization staff need to notify parents and director/administration that this is not tolerated, and their child may not attend that day.
- School-age children must be preapproved for care by the center director and assistant director before they may attend on school out days.

5.14 Personal Property

The Stepping Stones Learning Center administration office maintains a property management system that efficiently tracks lost and found property reports. Persons seeking information about lost or found property may do so by contacting Amber Smith. The Stepping Stones Learning Center assumes no risk for any loss or damage to personal property and recommends that all employees have personal insurance policies covering the loss of personal property left at the office. Staff are offered a locker to store belongings in the basement and may bring their own lock to secure items.

5.15 Health Related Issues

Employees who become aware of any health-related issue should notify their supervisor of health status including any and all allergies as soon as possible.

5.16 Employee Requiring Medical Attention

Employees should report all work-related injuries and accidents immediately to their supervisor, and then follow these steps:

- 1) In the case of an emergency go directly to the closest hospital or dial 911
- 2) Fill out the Workers Compensation form.

5.17 Visitors in the Workplace

For safety, insurance and other business considerations, only authorized visitors are allowed in the workplace. Management must be made aware of the visitor from the time they enter the building until the time they leave. Visits should be no longer than 15 minutes.

5.18 Employment of Relatives

Stepping Stones Learning Center is pleased to consider for employment qualified applicants who are related to employees. When Stepping Stones Learning Center employs more than one member of a family, one family member may not supervise the other. If such a situation should arise and the employees are unable to develop a workable solution, management will decide which employee may be transferred.

5.19 Weather-related and Emergency-related

As a part of their orientation, all employees of Stepping Stones Learning Center will be trained in the correct use of a fire extinguisher and where each one of them is located within the center. They will be shown the exit plans for each classroom and reminded that they are responsible for ensuring the safety of the children should they need to evacuate the center. All staff members have been educated in First Aid and CPR.

In the event of a tornado, fire, or other emergency that will lead to the evacuation of the building, all Stepping Stones Learning Center employees will have been successfully trained as to the correct procedure for evacuation. Each classroom will have an emergency exit plan posted on the wall nearest to the door. Each plan will allow for two exit options, an original and an alternative, as well as a prearranged meeting location where the children and teachers will meet following the evacuation. All teachers will be held accountable for the safe exit of all children in their care at that time.

Our evacuation plan will be practiced on a monthly basis. Upon completion of the drill, we will document the date, time, and actual amount of time that it took to successfully complete the fire or tornado drill. This documentation will be kept up to date, and posted in the Administration Directors office, and a copy of this documentation is forwarded to the State Licensing Department on a yearly basis once completed. The

documentation also included our weekly required checks that ensure that all smoke alarms and fire extinguishers are maintained and in good working order.

At times, emergencies such as severe weather, fires, or power failures can disrupt company operations. In such instances, Executive Staff will decide on the closure and will provide the official notification to the employees.

5.20 Fire

In the event of a fire, it is the responsibility of the Administrative Director and the teachers to take with them the daily attendance report, emergency file with parent names and phone numbers, and it is also the Directors responsibility to ensure that the local fire has been notified. Their first and most important priority is to make sure that all of the children and staff have evacuated the building in a safe and timely manner.

5.21 Temperature and Building Circumstances

Each classroom at Stepping Stones Learning Center will maintain a temperature of at least 68 degrees and no more than 80 degrees.

If the center should lose the use of heat, water, or electricity before the center opens, staff is to contact all the parents immediately. If the center should lose the use of heat, water, or electricity while the children are in attendance, staff will contact all parents immediately.

If we are unable to re-enter the building after a necessary evacuation, staff will contact parents immediately.

5.22 Contact Guidelines

There will always be a second adult available within five minutes of the center at all times. The name, address, and phone number of this person shall be posted in the office and/or breakroom, along with their signature stating that they are available to come whenever needed.

A listing of all emergency telephone numbers- Fire department, Police department, Rescue squad, and Poison Control will be posted by each phone at Stepping Stones Learning Center.

5.23 Non-Life Threatening Issues

Superficial injuries will be washed with soap and water and covered with a bandage or treated with ice. Parents will be told about minor injuries when they pick their child up.

5.24 Fieldtrip Injury & Injury on Stepping Stones Learning Center Property  
If there is a need for emergency medical treatment whether at the center or on a field trip 911 will be called and the child will be taken to an Eau Claire Area hospital, should an ambulance be needed, parents will be responsible for any costs. Parents will be contacted as soon as possible after contacting 911. If possible, staff will ask that the ambulance take your child to the emergency medical facility that is designated on the child enrollment form.

5.25 Extreme Weather  
Children, including infants and toddlers, will go outdoors daily when the weather permits. The children may be kept indoors during inclement weather such as any of the following:

- Heavy rain
- Temperatures above 90 degrees F
- Wind chills of 0 degrees F. or below for children aged 2 and above.
- Wind chills of 20 degrees F. or below for children under the age of 2

The inside may not be less than 67 degrees F. or higher than 80 degrees F.

5.26 Lost Child  
If a child is scheduled to come in to Stepping Stones Learning Center and does not show up within 30 minutes staff is required to contact guardians/emergency contacts to locate the child. If a child is scheduled to leave Stepping Stones Learning Center and does not leave within 30 minutes of pick-up time, staff is required to call guardians/emergency contacts.

In the event of a lost child, staff will check all areas of the center. If the child cannot be found, the child's parents and/or emergency contact and the police will be notified immediately.

5.27 Attendance, Tardiness & Punctuality Policy

- See Attendance & Tardiness Policy

5.28 Work Schedule  
Unless otherwise specified, regular full-time employees are expected to work at least 32 hours per work/week. Schedules will be made available to staff by Thursday the week

before. All requests for days off must be turned in two weeks in advance and must be approved by a director/assistant director. Before clocking in, all employees must be needed to meet state requirements/ratios. If you are not needed to meet these requirements do not clock in and contact the director/assistant director.

5.29 Meal & Break Period Policy  
Employees working eight (8) or more hours in a day must take a thirty (30) minute unpaid break. Additional breaks are at the director/assistant director's discretion and splitting breaks throughout the day is not prohibited. All employees are to clock out for breaks. If you do not clock out your break will be automatically deducted from your time card.

5.30 Harassment Policy  
Stepping Stones Learning Center does not tolerate workplace harassment. Workplace harassment can take many forms. It may, but is not limited to, words, signs, offensive jokes, cartoons, pictures, posters, e-mail jokes or statements, pranks, intimidation, physical assaults, or contact, and/or violence.

5.31 Sexual Harassment Policy  
Stepping Stones Learning Center does not tolerate sexual harassment, sexual harassment may include unwelcome sexual advances, requests for sexual favors, or other unwelcome verbal or physical contact of a sexual nature when such conduct creates an offensive, hostile, and intimidating working environment and prevents an individual from effectively performing the duties of their positions.

5.32 Violence in the Workplace Policy  
Stepping Stones Learning Center has adopted a policy prohibiting workplace violence, including intimidation, harassment, and/or coercion, which involve or affect the organization, or which occur on the facility or client property, will not be tolerated.

5.33 Confidential Information and Nondisclosure  
By continuing employment with Stepping Stones Learning Center, employees agree that they will not disclose or use any of the center's confidential information, either during or after their employment. Stepping Stones Learning Center sincerely hopes that its relationship with its employees will be long-term and mutually rewarding. However, employment with Stepping Stones Learning Center assumes an obligation to maintain confidentially, even after an employee is no longer employees with us.

5.34 Slander  
Definition of slander; Saying of something false and damaging, the act of offence of saying something false or malicious that damages somebody's reputation. Stepping

Stones does not tolerate slander and anyone partaking in slander will be terminated immediately.

5.35 Ethical Standards

Stepping Stones Learning Center insists on the highest ethical standards in conducting its business. Doing the right thing and acting with integrity are the two driving forces behind its great success story. When faced with ethical issues, employees are expected to make the right professional decision consistent with Stepping Stones Learning Center's principals and standards.

5.36 Professional Development

Every January, Stepping Stones Learning Center will hand out self-evaluation as well as program evaluation forms for staff to complete. These forms will focus on ethical values, individual and group goals, and input. Each January, all staff will be updated on all program policies and procedures as well as mentoring, coaching, and other professional development opportunities. Our goal is to build positive relationships between staff and families, curriculum alignment, teaching practices and skills partnering with the community and families and becoming a positive member of a team.

5.37 Dress Code Policy

Employees at Stepping Stones Learning Center are expected to present a clean and professional appearance while conducting business, in or outside of the office. Dressing in a fashion that is clearly unprofessional, that is deemed unsafe, or that negatively affects its reputation or image is not acceptable. Uniform shirts must be worn Monday through Thursday while working, to help children know who is in charge. Any form of close-toed shoes and black dress pants/capris, jeans, capris, khakis, must be worn as long as there are no noticeable rips, tears, or holes in the material. Skirts and shorts may not be worn. On Friday, each week, all employees have a choice to wear jeans.

5.38 Use of Equipment

Stepping Stones Learning Center will provide employees with the equipment needed to do their job. None of this equipment should be used for personal use, nor removed from the physical confines of the center, unless approved by the director.

5.39 Use of Computer, Phone, and Mail

Stepping Stones Learning Center property, including computers, phones, electronic mail, and voice mail, should be used only for conducting company business. Incidental and occasional personal use of company computers, phones, electronic mail, and voicemail systems is permitted, but information and messages stored in these systems will be treated no differently from other business-related information and messages. Cell phones are not allowed in the rooms. Please keep all cellular devices in your vehicle

or cubby while you are on the clock. Emergency phone calls can be transmitted through the business phone.

5.40 Use of Internet

Employees are responsible for using the internet in a manner that is ethical and lawful. Use of the internet must solely be for business purposes and must not interfere with employee productivity.

5.41 Use of Computer Software

Stepping Stones Learning Center does not condone the illegal duplication of software. The copyright law is clear. The copyright holder is given certain exclusive rights, including the right to make and distribute copies. Title 17 of the U.S. Code states that it is illegal to make or distribute copies of copyrighted material without authorization (section 106). The only exception is the user's right to make a backup copy for archival purposes (section 117).

5.42 Smoking Policy

Smoking is prohibited on the premises of the center. Premises means the tract of land on which the center is located, including all buildings and structures on that land. If you are caught smoking on the property, even in your vehicle, you will be written up.

5.43 Alcohol and Substance Abuse Policy

It is the policy of Stepping Stones Learning Center that the workplace be free of illicit drugs and/or alcoholic beverages.

If an employee at any time, while in the center, is under the influence of alcohol or drugs they will be terminated immediately. Stepping Stones Learning Center has a zero tolerance for alcohol and substance abuse while on the premises.

5.44 Solicitation and Distribution Policy

Solicitation for any cause during working time and in working areas is not permitted. Employees are not permitted to distribute non-company literature in work areas at any time during working time.

5.45 Corrective Action Policy

Failure to comply with employment procedures found in employment manual that does not lead to immediate dismissal may be dealt with in any of the following manners: a) Oral Reminder 3-5 business days after occurrence, b) Written warning 3-5 business days after occurrence, c) Decision making paid leave/ counseling session, 3-5 business days after occurrence, d) Termination immediately. Stepping Stones Learning Center would

like to offer employees a second chance from any mistakes that may occur. Three strikes and you are out policy will be implemented in these cases. All Corrective Procedures and disciplinary actions will be done in private and kept to the highest standards of confidentiality. Any occurrence that results in the harm of a child will be subject to immediate termination.

5.46 Grievance Procedure

Employees who have a job-related issue, question, or complaint should verbally approach the director/assistant director and put it in writing which will then be discussed with the observe, learn of, or in good faith, suspect a violation of Standards of Conduct of the center should immediately report the violation in accordance with the following procedures:

- 1) Contact the Administrative Director
- 2) Contact the Department of Health and Family Services- Division of Children and Family Services

5.47 Crisis Suspension

An employee who commits any serious violation of Stepping Stones Learning Center policies at minimum will be suspended without pay pending an investigation of situation. Following the investigation, the employee may be terminated without any previous disciplinary action having been taken.

5.48 Transfer Policy

Stepping Stones Learning Center recognizes that a desire for career growth and other needs may lead an employee to request a transfer to another position. An employee with proper qualifications will be eligible for a consideration for transfer does not occur within one year of the employee's date of hire or within one year of any previous transfer.

5.49 Outside Employment Policy

Employees may not take an outside job, either for pay or as a donation of their personal time, with a customer or competitor of Stepping Stones Learning Center during business hours; nor may employees do work on their own if it competes or interferes in any way with the sales of products or services that we provide to clients.

Employees are not able to care for any child currently enrolled at Stepping Stones Learning Center if it takes away business from the center. Termination of their position will take place if care is provided outside of the center during center hours.

Employees are able to provide care for families outside of business hours.

5.50 Employment Termination/Resignation

After the application of disciplinary steps, if it is determined by management that an employee's performance does not improve, or if the employee is again in violation of Stepping Stones Learning Center practices, rules, or standards of conduct, following a decision-making leave, employment with Stepping Stones Learning Center will be terminated.

Any accrued vacation is forfeited upon submitting notice and will not be paid out to the employee.

Vacation time cannot be used in lieu of a 2-week notice.

5.51 Exit Interview

In a voluntary separation situation, Stepping Stones Learning Center management would like to conduct an exit interview that will be completed by the director or assistant director to discuss the employee's reason for leaving and any other impressions that the employee may have about Stepping Stones Learning Center.

5.52 Return of Company Property & Expenses

Any Stepping Stones Learning Center property issues to employees, such as computer equipment, keys, parking passes, or company credit cards, must be returned to us at the time of termination. Employees will be responsible for any lost or damaged items.

If at any time a company key is not returned to the center at the time of termination the employee will be billed \$10 for the key fob.

If an employee owes the facility in past due or child care expenses the amount will be deducted from their last paychecks.