

# Introduction

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## Owner's Message

Starting Point Children's Center welcomes you and is proud to have you as a staff member of our team. Whether you are a new employee, or have been with us for some time, you are our most important and valued asset. We hope you feel comfortable with your work environment and with the people around you.

As an employee of Starting Point Children's Center you will be expected to exemplify excellence and quality of service and care. By following the employee policy and procedures outlined in this Handbook, you will be well on your way to meeting the goal of excellence and quality. You will be oriented on more specific policy and procedures through our on-going professional development to help guide decision-making and best practices.

Be sure to always keep the Code of Conduct at the forefront of all decision-making concerning children. As an employee Starting Point Children's Center, you are expected to provide a safe, nurturing and developmentally appropriate environment that supports the active learning of the children under our care.

At Starting Point Children's Center,

- **We** love working with kids, and are passionate about caring for our precious children.
- **We** maintain a safe, clean, organized, engaging and happy classroom environment for a wonderful childcare and learning experience.
- **We** are respectful and professional.
- **We** strive for excellence.
- **We** are committed to maintaining a positive, family like work environment.
- **We** help our kids to think creatively, to solve problems independently and respect themselves and others.
- **We** are compassionate, understanding and tolerant during difficult situations.
- **We** foster innovation.
- **We** embrace team work.
- **We** respect and support families.
- **We** commit to service at all levels.
- **We** respect and appreciate diversity.
- **We** actively listen and seek to understand.
- **We** communicate openly and productively.
- **We** use resources creatively and responsibly.

Best wishes for your continuing professional growth as we work and grow together for a long and satisfying career at Starting Point Children's Center.

We have prepared this Employee Handbook to provide you with information about our policies, rules, and present benefits. Please set aside some time to become familiar with this Handbook. It will be very helpful in answering many questions that arise. We recognize, however, that no Handbook can answer every question or address all situations. If you do not find an answer to your particular question in this Handbook, or if you would like a particular policy or procedure clarified, please feel free to ask the Director or its designated employee. We will be glad to help you answer every question.

Each staff member is encouraged to ask questions, seek explanations, make suggestions, and offer comments since all Handbooks require some interpretation, frequent revision, and interactive dialogue. While serving the parents and children of Starting Point Children's Center, you will have a great deal of freedom to express your unique skills, creativity, talents, and thinking.

### **This Handbook Supersedes All Previous**

Please note the date on the front page because it replaces all earlier Handbooks and takes precedence over all memoranda and/or oral descriptions of the terms and conditions of employment. To avoid confusion, please discard any old Handbooks and/or related materials.

### **At Will Employment / No Contract**

Please understand that nothing contained in this Handbook implied or in other statements of company policies, including statements made during the evaluation and wage review program, may be deemed to constitute either an expressed or implied promise of continuing employment. Since Texas is an at-will employment state, you are not under contract for employment. Thus, employment with Starting Point Children's Center is not for a definite term. Starting Point Children's Center or you may terminate employment at any time, for any reason or for no reason.

The contents of this Handbook are presented as a guide and as a matter of information only. While Starting Point Children's Center generally follows the policies outlined herein, they are not a contract. Starting Point Children's Center reserves the right to change all or part of any or all policies, at any time.

### **Equal Employment Opportunity**

In order to provide equal employment and advancement opportunities to all individuals, employment decisions at Starting Point Children's Center will be based on merit, qualification and ability. Starting Point Children's Center does not discriminate on the basis of race, color, religion, gender, national origin, age, physical disability or any other characteristic protected by law.

This policy governs all aspects of employment, including selection, job assignment, compensation, discipline, termination and access to benefits and training. Employees with questions or concerns about any type of discrimination in the work place are encouraged to bring these issues to the attention of the Director. Employees can raise concerns and make reports without fear of reprisal. Anyone found to be engaging in any type of unlawful acts and/or discrimination will be subject to disciplinary action, up to and including termination of employment.

## Confidentiality Policy

- Confidentiality of Children and Families Information
- Confidentiality of Employee's Information
- Confidentiality related to Proprietary Information
- Violation of Confidentiality Policy

## Confidentiality Policy

This Confidentiality Policy has been adopted to ensure confidentiality and protection of individual rights of privacy for children, families, and employees of Starting Point Children's Center. The individual dignity of children, families, and employees shall be respected and protected at all times in accordance with all applicable laws. Information about children, families, or employees must not be divulged to anyone other than persons who are authorized to receive such information. This policy extends to both internal and external disclosure of information. An employee's responsibility to maintain confidentiality regarding information learned about, children, their parents/guardians, families and other employees extends 24 hours per day, 7 days per week regardless of how or where the information was attained. Employees must be diligent in their efforts to maintain confidentiality, and should be aware that there are job related consequences for violations of confidentiality and rights of privacy, and that there is also the potential for civil liability against the individual employee and Starting Point Children's Center.

Due to the sensitive nature of information that you will know as a teacher of young children, it is imperative that you keep sensitive information confidential. Any information about children or their families must be shared on a "Need to Know" basis only. Thus, be very sensitive about discussing children's developmental needs and family information in public places such as lounge or hallway. This does not exclude off premise discussions and/or conversations. Any questions of major concerns should be forwarded to the Director. Protection of the interests of each child and family is vital in maintaining a standard of professionalism and privacy.

Employees shall also strive to be supportive of Center efforts by avoiding negative or malicious discussions about Starting Point Children's Center issues. Together we can achieve great child care and education for our parents and children. Stay positive and focus on the needs of the children in your care.

### **1. Confidentiality of Children's and Families' Information**

- a. All children's records must be locked in a secure file.
- b. Access to children's records is limited to employees with a "need to know".
- c. Children's records must not be removed from the Center.
- d. Children's records must never be left out on desks, tables, etc. where other people may have access to them.
- e. Children's or families' private information must never be discussed among employees except on the "need to know" basis. Employees must be particularly aware of their surroundings when discussing this information. Special caution must be taken to be sure other children, families, or employees do not overhear information, that is confidential.
- f. Discussion of children's or families' information with volunteers, other families, friends, or community members is prohibited.
- g. Information and documents considered confidential include, but are not limited to medical records, educational records, special needs records, family records, financial records, and any other private information about the children or their families.

- h. All requests for release of information shall be directed to the Center's Director.
- i. Information will only be released to persons outside of Starting Point Children's Center with the express written consent of the child's parent or legal guardian.

## **2. Confidentiality of Employee's Information**

Personnel files are confidential and shall remain locked at all times. It should be noted that personnel files maintained by Starting Point Children's Center are the official employment record of an employee and are the property of Starting Point Children's Center and cannot be duplicated without explicit authority from the Director. Employees must complete and sign a "Request to Review Personnel File Form" when inquiring or requesting paperwork related to her/his employment file. The purpose of the written request is to identify the individual requesting the information and to avoid disclosure to ineligible persons.

- a. Access to an employee's records is limited to appropriate supervisory employees.
- b. An Employee's records must not be removed from the Center. An employee may review his/her personnel file in the presence of the Director during regular business hours.
- c. Records may not be removed from the personnel file.
- d. An employee may submit a rebuttal if he/she disagrees with material found in his/her file.
- e. A former employee will not have access to his/her personnel file after employment ends.
- f. An Employee's records must never be left out on desks, tables, etc. where other people may have access to them.
- g. An Employee's private information must never be discussed among employees except on a "need to know" basis. Employees must be particularly aware of their surroundings when discussing this information. Special caution must be taken to be sure other children, families, or employees do not overhear information, that is confidential.
- h. Discussion of an employee's information with volunteers, families, friends, or community members is prohibited.
- i. Information and documents, which are considered to be confidential include, but are not limited to medical records, educational records, employment records, financial or pay records, and any other private information about the employee.
- j. All requests for release of information to persons outside of Starting Point Children's Center shall be directed to the Center's Director.
- k. Information will only be released to persons outside Starting Point Children's Center with the express written consent of the employee.

**Starting Point Children's Center reserves the right to provide copies of employment related documentation to employees.**

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### **3. Confidentiality Related to Proprietary Information**

Starting Point Children's Center may develop unique techniques, curriculum, and tools for evaluation, which make our program more competitive in the industry and are not to be revealed to sources outside of the company. Anything which the company designs, produces, implements, and markets is treated as Proprietary Information, also called trade secrets. This includes, but shall not be limited to, the Center's client list, employee list, curriculum, philosophy, mission statement, personnel policies, and parent handbook.

No employee should discuss proprietary information with other employees in any public place where it is possible they could be over heard. Employees must understand that it is not only their duty to protect Starting Point Children's Center proprietary information during their term of employment, but the legal obligation continues even after separation from employment. Employees are required to return any and all documentation that contains proprietary information at the time of separation.

Starting Point Children's Center is ready and willing to enforce this obligation through all available legal remedies, as necessary.

### **4. Violation of Confidentiality Policy**

Any employee/volunteer who violates the Confidentiality Policy will be subject to disciplinary action up to and including termination. In addition to job related consequences, the employee/volunteer may face possible civil liability for their actions.

## **Business Ethics and Code of Conduct**

- Business Ethics and Code of Conduct
- Social Media Policy
- Sexual and other Unlawful Harassment
- Gross Misconduct
- Drug Abuse Policy
- Acceptance of Gifts and Gratuity

## **Business Ethics and Code of Conduct**

The successful business operation and reputation of Starting Point Children’s Center is built upon the principles of fair dealing and ethical conduct of our employees. Our reputation for integrity and excellence requires careful observance of the spirit and letter of applicable laws and regulations, as well as a conscientious regard for the highest professional standards of conduct and personal integrity.

The continued success of Starting Point Children’s Center is dependent upon our clients’ trust and we are dedicated to preserving that trust. Employees owe a duty to Starting Point Children’s Center, and its clients, to act in a way that will merit their continued trust and confidence. Starting Point Children’s Center will comply with all applicable laws and regulations and expects its directors, officers, and employees to conduct business in accordance with the letter, spirit, and intent of all relevant laws, statutes, ordinances, and regulations and to refrain from any illegal, dishonest, or unethical conduct. In general, the use of good judgment, based on high ethical principles, will guide employees with respect to acceptable conduct.

When a situation arises where it is difficult to determine the proper course of action, the employee should discuss the matter with his or her immediate supervisor or Director for advice and consultation.

Compliance with this policy of Business Ethics and Conduct is the responsibility of every Starting Point Children’s Center employee. Disregarding or failing to meet this standard of business ethics and conduct will result in disciplinary action up to and including termination.

## **Social Media Policy**

Employees are strictly prohibited from posting any information and/or photographs related to Starting Point Children’s Center, its employees and/or the children/families served by Starting Point Children’s Center on any internet website and/or blog including but not limited to websites like Facebook, Twitter, Linked In, and Instagram. As your employer, we reserve the right to review sites to ensure adherence to this policy. Any violation of this policy will result in disciplinary action up to and including termination. Further, Starting Point Children’s Center will pursue all legal remedies available for actions in violation of this policy

## **Conflict of Interest**

A conflict of interest regarding Starting Point Children’s Center is defined as an activity or interest which is inconsistent with or opposed to the legitimate best interest of Starting Point Children’s Center. It is the policy of Starting Point Children’s Center that all employees and/or contractors/consultants will avoid personal transactions or situations in which their personal interest will or will appear to conflict with those of Starting Point Children’s Center. A conflict of interest occurs whenever an employee permits the prospect of direct or indirect personal gain to influence her or his judgment or action when acting on behalf of Starting Point Children’s Center. The following examples are representative but not inclusive of potential conflicts of interest:

- a. No employee shall do business with a member of her or his immediate family on behalf of Starting Point Children's Center, unless the circumstances of the proposed relationship have been clearly reviewed by the Director/Owner and has been deemed to have no potential or inherent conflict of interest qualities.
- b. All employees must deal with suppliers, contractors, customers, and all other persons doing business with Starting Point Children's Center in the best interest of Starting Point Children's Center without favor or preference based on personal consideration.
- c. No employee shall misuse privileged information or reveal confidential data to outsiders for the purpose of personal gain or for any reason other than agency purposes.
- d. No employee shall deal with Starting Point Children's Center clients or suppliers as a representative of another firm or for her or his own account.
- e. No employee shall participate in the selection, award or administration of a contract where to her or his knowledge she or he or her or his immediate family has a financial interest.
- f. No employee shall solicit, accept or offer gratuities, favors, or anything of monetary value from other employees or persons receiving benefits or services or from contractors or potential contractors for personal gain or inherent conflict of interest.

## **Sexual and other Unlawful Harassment**

Sexual harassment **will not** be tolerated in any way, shape or form. Starting Point Children's Center is committed to providing a work environment that is free of discrimination and unlawful harassment. Actions, words, jokes, or comments based on an individual's sex, race, ethnicity, age, religion, or any other legally protected characteristic will not be tolerated. As an example, sexual harassment (both overt and subtle) is a form of employee misconduct that is demeaning to another person, undermines the integrity of the employment relationship and is strictly prohibited.

Any employee who wants to report an incident of sexual or other unlawful harassment should promptly report the matter to the Owner/Director. Employees can raise concerns and make reports without fear of reprisal.

## **Gross Misconduct**

Some offenses are so serious that they can result in termination without previous warnings. The following examples are listed for the guidance of all. This list is not intended to be a comprehensive list of all prohibited activity. The following actions may result in immediate termination:

- Inappropriate behavior toward parents. All staff is expected to be professional and courteous at all times. If a parent is rude to you, please allow your Director to handle the situation.
- Neglect or physical abuse of a child, including corporal punishment (inflection of physical pain on a child as a means of controlling behavior). This includes, but is not limited to, spanking, hitting, shaking slapping, thumping, or pinching a child.

- Withholding of food, nap, or other comfort from a child.
- Failure to report to work three consecutive workdays without proper notification
- Falsification of Center records (i.e. employment application, time clock, and your records)
- Working under the influence of alcohol or illegal drugs.
- Smoking in prohibited areas.
- Conviction of a felony for any offense committed while employed by the Center.
- Fighting, threatening violence or boisterous or disruptive activity in the work place.
- Leaving a child unattended (inside or outside).
- Allowing a child to leave the Center with an unauthorized person.
- Sleeping / Napping while supervising children.
- Habitual absenteeism or tardiness without notice or unauthorized absences from workstation during the workday.
- Sexual or other unlawful or unwelcome harassment.
- Negligence or improper conduct leading to damage of employer-owned or customer-owned property.
- Insubordination that show gross disrespect such as threatening, profanity, or yelling at the Directors.
- Unauthorized use of telephones, mail system, or other employer-owned equipment (**No** cell phones allowed in the Center during work hours!)
- Possession, distribution, sale, transfer, or use of alcohol or illegal drugs in the work place, while on duty, or while operating employer-owned vehicles or equipment
- Unsatisfactory performance or conduct
- Sharing confidential information about the Center or any of its employees.
- Promoting and/or sharing rumors or negative information about Starting Point Children’s Center.

There will be repercussions to any violation of the above rules. Depending on the severity of the offense and the Director’s discretion, violations may be followed by a warning, suspension, and/or termination of employment. Severe offenses may result in immediate termination.

## **Drug Abuse Policy**

Starting Point Children’s Center recognizes that alcohol and drug abuse in the work place has become a major concern. We believe that by reducing drug and alcohol abuse, we will improve the safety, health, and productivity of employees. The objective of our drug abuse policy is to provide a safe and healthy work place for all employees, prevent accidents and comply with Section 7.10 of the Texas Worker’s Compensation Act.

The use, possession, sale, transfer, purchase or being under the influence of drugs by employees at any time on company premises or while on company business is prohibited. Employees must not report for duty or be on company property while under the influence of, or have in their possession while on company property, any drug.

## **1. Definition of Drug**

For this policy, the term “drug” wherever it appears in this policy statement includes alcoholic beverage as well as inhalants and illegal drugs.

## **2. Consequences of Violating the Drug Abuse Policy**

Violation of this drug abuse policy will result in one of the following forms of corrective action: Immediate discharge, suspension, probation, oral warning, or written warning. In arriving at a decision for proper action, the seriousness of the infraction, the past record of the employee, and the circumstances surrounding the matter will all be taken into consideration.

While we do not sponsor or endorse any specific drug treatment programs, such programs are available through public and private health care facilities in our area. Affected employees are encouraged to seek assistance for themselves and their dependents. Starting Point Children’s Center offers no coverage for expenses for health insurance or expenses related to a drug treatment program.

## **3. Education and Training Programs**

We do not offer, nor require participation in, drug and alcohol abuse education and training programs. However, various public and private facilities in our area offer such programs and affected employees are encourage to seek assistance.

## **4. Drug Testing**

We reserve the right to require drug testing as a condition for employment. However, employees who operate vehicles owned or operated on behalf of Starting Point Children’s Center may be subject to drug testing in the event of a vehicle accident occurring during normal business and/or other evidence that may indicate drug usage that may be detrimental to the health, safety or well-being of that person, the children in care or other staff members.

## **Acceptance of Gifts and Gratuities**

Employees of Starting Point Children’s Center are prohibited from accepting gifts, money, services, or gratuities from clients, vendors, contractors, and all other persons doing business with Starting Point Children’s Center. The only exception is a holiday, birthday, or special occasion gifts from families. Gifts with a value of \$50 or more shall be reported to Director. Violation of this policy will result in disciplinary action up to and including immediate termination.

## **Child Abuse & Neglect**

- Child Abuse Prevention
- Reporting Abuse and Neglect

## Child Abuse Prevention

The mission of Starting Point Children's Center is to nurture all children entrusted to our care in a warm and loving environment. In keeping with that purpose, this policy seeks to assure that our Center is continually working toward providing an environment safe from physical and sexual abuse for those participating in receiving and providing childcare services. When those who are employed at Starting Point Children's Center engage in any kind of child abuse or gross misconduct, they violate the terms of their employment.

When an employee is accused of child abuse or neglect, whether the abuse or neglect is reported to have occurred at the facility or not, they will be placed on investigatory suspension pending the outcome of Child Protective Services investigation as well as any criminal charges filed against the employee. Starting Point Children's Center will cooperate fully with any investigations into accusations of child abuse and/or neglect and all employees will be required to cooperate as well. Starting Point Children's Center will maintain strict confidentiality regarding information involving both the accused employee and the child/children involved in the report.

Employees indicated/founded and/or convicted of any crime against a child will be immediately terminated.

Employees cleared of the accusation by Child Protective Services and/or found innocent of criminal charges will be returned to their position on the first business day following receipt of documentation proving charges/investigations are closed.

## Reporting Abuse and Neglect

ALL employees must report all actual or suspected child abuse of any child attending the Center as soon as possible to the Director. Texas law requires caregivers to report suspected child abuse or neglect to the Texas Department of Protective and Regulatory Services of law enforcement. Call **1-800-252-5400** to make confidential reports. Failure to report suspected abuse or neglect is a crime.

Under the Child Protective Services Act, mandated reporters are required to report any suspicion of abuse or neglect to the appropriate authorities. The Child Protective Services Act is designed to protect the welfare and best interest of all children. **ALL EMPLOYEES** of Starting Point Children's Center are considered **mandated reporters**, under this law. Employees are required to discuss any suspicions of child abuse/neglect with the Center's Director, who will make all reports of suspected child abuse/neglect on behalf Starting Point Children's Center.

Employees of Starting Point Children's Center are not to discuss their suspicions with parents prior to the Center reporting the matter to the appropriate authorities. Starting Point Children's Center takes this responsibility very seriously and will make all warranted reports to the appropriate authorities.

**Mandated reporters can be held criminally responsible if they fail to report suspected abuse or neglect.**

## Employment Policy

- Employment Provisional Period
- Essential Functions
- Clearance Policy, FBI Background Checks
- Firearms or Weapons
- Employee Personal Items
- Employee Prescription / Medications
- Inspection and Searches
- Customer Relations
- Non-Fraternization
- Non-Solicitation
- Outside Employment
- Smoke-Free Workplace
- Alcoholic Beverages
- Employee - Corrective Actions
- Resignation
- Final Pay
- Conflict Resolution
- Former Employees

## Employment Provisional Period

During the first ninety (90) days of employment, you will be considered a "Provisional Employee" during which time you are free to terminate your employment with Starting Point Children's Center at any time, with or without reason; and Starting Point Children's Center has the right to terminate your employment at any time, with or without reason.

During the Provisional Period, Starting Point Children's Center will evaluate the employee's performance to determine if she or he meets the standards set by SPCC as outlined in the job description, Employee Handbook, and child care licensing standards. Upon successful completion of the provisional period, the Director will recommend retention of the employee to the Owner. Upon approval by the Owner, the employee will attain regular employment status and thereby will be deemed eligible for those benefits provided to regular employees of the same classification.

The Provisional Period may be extended up to an additional 45 days, by approval of the Center's Director and only where it is deemed necessary and appropriate. Should the introductory employee not be recommended for regular status, the employee will be terminated no later than the last day of the provisional period or any extension thereof.

Provisional Employees shall not be eligible to use paid sick leave, vacation, personal, or any other form of paid absence including designated holidays.

## Essential Functions

In addition to the requirements set forth by the state Minimum Standard Rules for Childcare Centers, Starting Point Children's Center requires that all employees must be able to perform the following:

1. Able to observe, see, hear, and respond to children's needs, emergencies and conflicts that might occur in a classroom, on the playground, in bathrooms and common areas.
2. Able to lift 30 pounds from the floor to a waist high table 10-15 times daily.
3. Able to reach a child 30-50 feet away within 30 seconds without danger to the staff person's health.
4. Able to crouch to a child's height, maintain eye contact at the child's level, sit on the floor, and stand tall enough to reach children on the highest piece of indoor equipment.
5. Able to determine cognitive, social, and physical needs of children and communicate in writing and verbally in the English language at a level that 90-95% of parents and staff members can understand and respond.
6. Able to handle the stress, tension and exasperation that contact with many children and parents bring every day.
7. Direct Supervision of every child is expected at all times. Failure to provide supervision will be subject to discipline up to termination.

8. Provide warm, nurturing interactions at each child's level.

## **Clearance Policy, FBI Background Checks**

State law mandates that all new employees have current (less than 3 months old) clearances from State Police, FBI Fingerprints and child abuse clearance. State law and Licensing Regulations stipulate that the clearances show the employee has no open accusations or convictions of child abuse and/or neglect. State law and Licensing Regulations further set guidelines for what convictions and arrests may and may not appear on the clearances.

When an employee is hired, she or he must provide the current clearances or copies of the completed clearance applications. Employees who provide clearance applications must submit returned clearances immediately upon receipt if clearances are returned directly to them. Failure to immediately submit clearances to the Center's Director will result in disciplinary action up to and including termination. These documents will become a part of the personnel record.

All of these clearances need to be filled out or done prior to the beginning of employment. Starting Point Children's Center may require, in its sole discretion, employees to re-submit clearance applications at any time during their employ.

## **Firearms or Weapons**

State regulations and Center policy prohibits any employee from possessing or carrying, onto the premises, a firearm or weapon of any kind. The possession of a weapon on Starting Point Children's Center premises is grounds for immediate termination.

## **Employee's Personal Items**

Starting Point Children's Center is not responsible for an employee's personal items brought to the facility or to any work-related field trip or training session. Employees are discouraged from bringing personal items to the workplace.

## **Employee's Prescriptions / Medications**

According to Department of Public Welfare licensing regulation all prescription and/or over the counter medication must be kept in the agency's designated medication location out of reach of children. Employees are strictly prohibited from carrying any prescription and/or over the counter medication on their person, in their purse or any work bag and/or keeping prescription and/or over the counter medication in their classrooms. Employees requiring medication during the work day must secure their medication in the designated medication location. The only exception would be for rescue inhalers.

Employees must inform the Director that they are carrying a rescue inhaler throughout the facility. If any other medical condition requires an employee to keep emergency medication on their person at all times, the employee MUST present the Director with medical certification detailing the need for medication to be immediately available. Starting Point Children's Center will evaluate these circumstances on a case by case basis. Starting Point Children's Center will dialogue with the employee and their certified health care provider to see if a reasonable accommodation can be reached so as not to violate the above referenced licensing regulation while maintaining the employee's and children's health and safety.

## **Inspection and Searches**

Starting Point Children's Center has the right to require employees, while on duty or on Starting Point Children's Center premises, including parking lots, to agree to inspections of personal property, vehicles, as well as the offices, desks, and file cabinets assigned to them. If an employee withholds consent to such an inspection, the employee will be immediately terminated. Starting Point Children's Center reserves the right to remove an employee's personal possession(s), which it deems inappropriate for the workplace. An employee who is terminated will not be given an opportunity to "clean out her or his desk." Any personal property which may be in the work space will be packed and shipped to the employee at the employee's expense. Employee may bring personal items related to a legitimate work purpose into the program. These items include but are not limited to: resource books, curriculum supplement materials, and/or classroom decorations. Any personal items brought onto agency property must be properly registered with the Center's Director. Employees must complete a sign in sheet detailing the items brought into the agency. The items must be clearly labeled with the employee's name when they are initially brought into the agency. Should an employee fail to register personal items with the Center's Director the items will be considered a donation to Starting Point Children's Center.

## **Customer Relations**

Customers are one of our organization's most valuable assets. Every employee represents Starting Point Children's Center to our customers and to the public. The manner in which we perform our jobs presents an image of our entire organization to our clients and the community at large. Customers judge all of us by how they are treated by each and every employee. Nothing is more important than being respectful, courteous, friendly, helpful, and prompt in the attention given to clients. Our personal contact with the public, our manners on the telephone and the communications we send to clients are a reflection not only of ourselves, but also of the professionalism of Starting Point Children's Center. Positive client relations enhance the public's perception or image of Starting Point Children's Center. As a requirement of your employment, it is expected that all employees of Starting Point Children's Center will interact respectfully, courteously, and promptly with our clients. Employees who fail to have appropriate customer relations will be subject to disciplinary action, up to and including termination.

## **Non- Fraternization**

Clients of Starting Point Children’s Center shall be provided with the best possible quality service. Employees shall treat clients, vendors, co-workers and the public with courtesy, appropriate distance, and respect. Attending a "social event" or a "private gathering" with a client of the Starting Point Children’s Center shall occur only when approved by the Owner. Employees should abstain from any intimate physical contact and/or involvement with clients. Employees should also avoid any unwelcome advances and intimate acts made by clients. Employees are required to report to their immediate supervisor any unwelcome advances or attempts at intimate acts made by clients or co-workers. Employees should abstain from any intimate physical contact or involvement with other employees. This shall include dating other employees. Employees should immediately report any action by a client or employee that would be considered a violation of this policy to his or her immediate supervisor. Employees who violate this policy will be subject to disciplinary action up to and including termination.

## **Non-Solicitation**

Employees of Starting Point Children’s Center are strictly prohibited from solicitation of any kind while working at Starting Point Children’s Center. Employees who violate this policy will be subject to disciplinary action up to and including termination.

## **Outside Employment**

Employees of Starting Point Children’s Center are prohibited from accepting any kind of employment from any client of Starting Point Children’s Center. Employees are specifically prohibited from accepting employment as a baby-sitter from any client of Starting Point Children’s Center without notifying and obtaining prior approval from the Owner. Violation of this policy will result in disciplinary action up to and including termination.

## **Smoke-Free Workplace**

All facilities, grounds, and vehicles of Starting Point Children’s Center are Smoke-Free Environments. Smoking is prohibited in any of these areas. In addition, employees are prohibited from becoming nuisances to Starting Point Children’s Center neighbors by loitering on their property while smoking. Violation of this policy will result in disciplinary action.

## **Alcoholic Beverages**

No alcoholic beverage may be brought into Starting Point Children’s Center. Any staff member who appears to be under the influence of alcohol or drugs (legal or illegal) must leave Starting Point Children’s Center premises immediately. Please review Starting Point Children’s Center Drug Abuse Policy for additional information.

## Employee - Corrective Actions

- **Verbal Warning**

A verbal warning may be given to any employee when a minor violation of agency policies or procedures has occurred. A verbal warning may be given by any supervisor and need not be preceded by any other disciplinary action. Employees are required to sign a receipt/form of a verbal warning. Signature of receipt does not indicate that the employee agrees with the verbal warning, it simply indicates that they have received a copy of the document. Failure or refusal to sign the verbal warning will be considered insubordination and will result in disciplinary action up to and including termination. Copies of all documentation regarding corrective action plans will be filed in the employee's personal file.

- **Written Warning**

Employees may be given a written warning for violations of agency policies and procedures. The written warning will clearly describe the deficiency in the performance or conduct and will site the policy, licensing regulation or procedure violated. The written warning will contain a corrective action plan, which will outline the necessary action to correct the deficiency (ies) and a time table under which the corrective action must occur. Employees are required to sign a Corrective Action Form (CAF). Signature of the CAF does not indicate that the employee agrees with the written warning, it simply indicates that they have received a copy of the document. Failure or refusal to sign the written warning will be considered insubordination and will result in disciplinary action up to and including termination. Copies of all documentation regarding corrective action plans will be filed in the employee's personal file.

- **Investigatory Suspensions**

The Director and /or Owner may suspend an employee for Investigatory purposes. The Investigatory Suspension can be with or without pay as determined by Center's Director and/or Owner and will result in either full reinstatement with back pay, if appropriate, or further disciplinary action, including termination. Examples of situations which would warrant use of Investigatory suspension include, but are not limited to:

1. Report of child abuse or neglect.
2. Accusations of theft.
3. Violation of Substance Abuse Policy.
4. Other similar situations.

Employees are required to sign an Investigatory Suspension Form (ISF). Signature of the ISF does not indicate that the employee agrees with the Investigatory Suspension, it simply indicates that they have received a copy of the document. Failure or refusal to sign the Investigatory Suspension Form will be considered insubordination and will result in disciplinary action up to and including termination.

- **Suspension**

Suspension of an employee may occur at the discretion of the Director and/or Owner . Suspension of an employee will not require prior verbal or written disciplinary action. Suspension will be without pay. The employee will be notified in writing of the policy violations and the length of the suspension and any corrective action required upon return to work. The employee is required to sign a copy of the suspension notification acknowledging receipt. Failure to sign for receipt of the suspension notification will be considered insubordination and will result in further disciplinary action including termination. When circumstances permit, an employee will be suspended upon receipt of the notification. However, an employee may be suspended verbally if immediate suspension is in the best interest of Starting Point Children’s Center. Suspension by verbal notice may be taken by the immediate supervisor followed immediately by written approval of the Owner.

- **Termination**

Although termination is never a pleasant experience, times do arise that employees are removed from their position. Termination shall not require prior verbal or written disciplinary action. Starting Point Children’s Center is an “at-will” employer and may terminate the employment relationship at any time with or without cause and without notice. This policy is to be used as a guide for employee’s, but is not inclusive of the reasons or causes of termination from employment. Termination is an action approved by the Director or Owner. Notification of Termination may be written or verbal. Causes for involuntary termination include, but are not limited to, the following:

- Unsatisfactory provisional period
- Inappropriate discipline of a child, including spanking, threatening to spank, pulling hair, or any other rough or inappropriate handling of children as interpreted by management.
- Subjecting a child to humiliation, ridicule, depriving a child of a meal or snack, or using abusive language toward any child or staff member.
- The witness of any inappropriate discipline or handling of a child, and failing to report the incident to management.
- Abusive or inconsiderate treatment of parents, staff, or visitors.
- Unauthorized removal or records, or unauthorized divulgence of parents, children, or Center Confidential Information.
- Insubordination or refusal to perform assigned duties or failure to follow instructions.
- Gross carelessness or negligence that in any way threatens the well-being or safety of the children, staff, visitors, parents, or premises of Starting Point Children’s Center.
- Destruction of Starting Point Children’s Center property or other related properties.

- Sleeping or napping during work hours.
- Coercing or inciting others to limit work performance or engage in any practice in violation of Center rules or the “Minimum Standards for Child Care Centers” as set forth by the state of Texas or any other regulatory agency overseeing the operation and regulation of Starting Point Children’s Center
- Possession of any weapon.
- Accusation or conviction or law violation which relates to moral turpitude, child abuse, or matters pertaining to physical well-being of others.
- Falsification of Employment records.
- Falsification of time records, either your own or other employees.
- Falsification of children’s records including Medication Authorization Forms, Daily Activity Sheets or any other child or Center related information.
- Being absent from work without prior notification. Employees must notify the Director in writing, in person, or by phone prior to the scheduled start time.
- Any action that, in the opinion of management, endangers the safety, well-being or reputation of children, parents, staff or any other related person or entity.
- Excessive absences or tardiness.
- 
- Failure to comply with Texas Department of Family and Protective Services Licensing Division Minimum Standards for Child-Care Centers.
- 
- Violation of Confidentiality rules.
- Theft or misuse of funds, equipment, or property.
- Absence from work without notification and/or approval as per related policies.
- Discourteous treatment of the public, clients, co-workers.
- Inappropriate behavior, including use of vulgar language in the presence of children, families or employees.
- Non-performance of duties resulting in injury to the Center, children, families, sub-contractors, vendors, or employees.
- Being abusive (verbally or physically) or neglectful to children, parents, or employees.
- Violation of the Substance Abuse Control Policy.

- Failure to submit required documentation within mandated time frame.
- Receipt of 3 warnings for any violations during any 12-month period; the date of the third warning will be the employee's last day of employment.
- Failure to return to work following a leave of absence.
- Failure to meet deadlines as presented by supervisor.

## **Resignation**

Employees are required to give at least two (2) weeks' notice of the intent to terminate employment. Notice must be given in writing to the Director. Employees in Management positions (Director, Assistant Director, or similar Management positions) are required to provide a minimum of 4 weeks' notice. Employees may be removed from duties prior to the expiration of the notice period at the discretion of the Director or Owners without affecting compensation owed.

Employees may not be absent from work for any reason during the notice period. Employees who give the required notice, return all company related property in their possession, are not absent from work during the notice period and participate constructively in the exit interview will be entitled to payment of accumulated vacation and personal leave time. Employees who fail to meet the above requirements will forfeit any accrued payment and will be considered ineligible for re-hire.

Employees that fail to provide a written resignation notice and/or are absent during the required notice period will be paid at the prevailing minimum State wage rate for any unpaid hours due by Starting Point Children's Center.

## **Final Pay**

The Texas Payday Law regulates the timing of the final paycheck in section 61.014. If an employee is laid off, discharged, fired, or otherwise involuntarily separated from employment, the final pay is due within six (6) calendar days of discharge. If the employee quits, retires, resigns, or otherwise leaves employment voluntarily, the final pay is due on the next regularly scheduled payday following the effective date of resignation. Any amount due by the employee to Starting Point Children's Center (such as unpaid child care services, unreturned company property, temporary loans / cash advance, etc.) will be handled via wage deduction.

## **Conflict Resolution**

The following procedure has been established to ensure that all parties to any conflict receive fair and equal hearing by those responsible for resolving conflicts.

1. The employee/petitioner must submit a written statement to the Director within 5 working days of the employee's knowledge of the event, which caused the conflict.

2. The Director shall attempt to resolve the conflict within 2 working days following receipt of the statement and issue a decision.
3. If the employee/petitioner is not satisfied, or if, indeed the conflict is with the Director, the employee/petitioner may appeal the Director's decision within 2 working days to the Starting Point Children's Center Owner.
4. The Owner will summarize in writing the party's issues and the conflict resolution plan. This summary will be filed in the employee's personnel record and a copy will be provided to the parties.
5. Terminated/Former Employees are not eligible to participate in the Conflict Resolution process.

## **Former Employees**

Former employees are not permitted on Starting Point Children's Center property without prior permission from Director and/or Owner. Former employees who wish to visit, volunteer and/or attend an agency function must contact the Director in writing, via email or via telephone to ask permission. Granting permission is in the sole discretion of the Director and/or Owner and will be based upon the best interest of the Center.

Current Employees may not discuss any matters related to Starting Point Children's Center with a former employee. Any inquiries made by a former employee to a current employee should be directed to Center's Director.

Former employees should also be aware that professional codes of conduct and confidentiality still apply even after employment is terminated. Starting Point Children's Center will seek to hold former employees accountable for any violation of client and or staff's rights of privacy. Further, Starting Point Children's Center will pursue all legal remedies available for actions which slander, defame and or impugn the business reputation of the Center.

Former employees will only be eligible for re-hire if they meet the following criteria:

1. Gave appropriate notice prior to leaving employment (This may be waived in cases of emergency medical circumstances that make giving notice impossible).
2. Returned all agency property prior to leaving employment.
3. Constructively participated in an Exit Interview prior to leaving employment.
4. Presented no issues following separation of employment, i.e., maintained professional codes of conduct, maintained confidentiality according Starting Point Children's Center confidentiality policy.
5. Former employees seeking re-hire must personally contact the Director in writing, by email, and/or by telephone to inquire their eligibility status for re-hire prior to submitting an employment application.

## Employee Guidelines

- Dress Code
- Working Hours
- Work Schedule
- Pay Period
- Staff Meetings
- Lunch Period
- Smoking
- Phone Calls and Cell Phones
- Glass Containers
- Emergency Contacts
- Name Address and Telephone Numbers
- Attendance
- Illness
- Visitors
- Security
- Lost and Found

# Employee Guidelines

## Dress Code

Starting Point Children's Center ("Starting Point") has a standard dress code that applies to all staff directly involved in the care of children. The dress code was designed to provide the staff with a professional, neat, attractive, and suitable dress appropriate for working and caring for children. Employees reporting for duty in attire that does not meet the standards of the dress code of Starting Point may not be permitted to begin his or her shift. The Director or Designated employee will determine the action, if any, necessary to comply with or satisfy the dress code requirement.

- **Shirts**

Upon employment with Starting Point, each new employee will receive two staff shirts. Staff may also wear other Starting Point logo shirts that they may have throughout years of service (field trips, etc.). All staff must wear logo shirts when directly involved in the supervision of children and must be worn during all paid working hours. Staff shirts must be neat, clean and in good condition prior to the beginning of each scheduled workday. It is the responsibility of each employee to launder and care for these shirts per the manufacturers labeled instructions.

- **Pants, Shorts, Skirts, Capris**

Pants, short, capris and skirts must be navy blue, khaki or black color. Blue Jean and jean fabrics are allowed. Clothing must be neat, clean and in good condition prior to the beginning of each scheduled workday - free of holes, rips, tears, and stains, fading, prints, advertisement, propaganda, or inappropriate logos / designs. Shorts must be knee length. Staff should not wear leggings, sweat pants, yoga pants, biking style shorts, gym shorts, running shorts, athletic shorts, or any other type of clothing not appropriate for a professional child care environment.

- **Shoes**

All shoes worn by staff must be suitable for the childcare environment. Each staff must wear shoes that have enclosed toes, enclosed heels, and rubber sole to provide some degree of traction and flexibility. Absolutely no sandals, flip-flops, clogs, water shoes, strapless shoes or mid or high heel shoe, cleats, work boots or cowboy boots. Tennis or athletic type shoes are preferred.

- **Accessories**

Jewelry is discouraged. Excessive jewelry can cause unintentional injuries to children during lifting or assisting children in various activities. Necklaces and earrings must be short, to avoid a child reaching up and pulling on it. Jewelry, including rings, must not display offensive language or any spikes/studs that could harm children. Belts should be a neutral color (i.e. black, gray, brown, navy blue, white, etc.) and must not display any logos, studs or spikes, or offensive language.

All female employees are required to wear a bra.

- **Tattoos & Piercing**

Tattoos of any nature must be covered up by clothing or tattoo cover-up makeup. As a goal of maintaining a professional image, every reasonable attempt should be made to cover existing tattoos. This policy is for all employees and violations will result in a written warning. Body piercings are allowed in ears and anywhere covered by clothing or not visible. Piercings anywhere on the face or not covered by clothing should be removed during work hours.

## **Working Hours**

Teachers should be in classrooms five minutes prior to the beginning of their scheduled start time. It is important to communicate with the teacher that you are relieving or the teacher that is relieving you, so that any information concerning the children can be discussed at that time.

## **Work Schedule**

Starting Point Children's Center is open year around except for the holidays indicated previously. It should be noted that staffing at Starting Point Children's Center is directly related to the number of children enrolled. If the enrollment decreases, it is possible that the number of hours worked by the staff would be reduced. In such a case the employee would be paid only for the actual number of hours worked.

All employees must be willing to accept and expect variations in their schedules as required by the needs of the children and the business. The management will make every effort to make variations in schedules fair and equitable but decisions will be made per seniority of the staff, specific job performance by each employee, the employees' experience, and other factors determined by the management to be in the best interest of Starting Point Children's Center.

Temporary and permanent schedule changes may be necessary to effectively meet the needs of the program. Employees who refuse a schedule change will be subject to disciplinary action up to and including termination.

If you are unable to report to work for any reason, you must notify your immediate supervisor at least 12 hours prior to your scheduled starting time. Failure to notify your immediate supervisor in a timely manner will be considered unexcused absence and will be subject to disciplinary action. Employees who fail to notify their supervisor at all may be considered to have abandoned their position, which will result in termination.

## **Overtime**

The nature of the duties and responsibilities of some non-exempt employees may require overtime work from time to time. Overtime work should be considered an exceptional situation. If a non-exempt employee is required to work overtime hours, the employee will receive monetary compensation for the additional hours worked as prescribed by wage and hour laws.

**All overtime must be approved by the employee's immediate supervisor prior to working the overtime hours.**

In cases when obtaining prior approval is not possible, such as situations involving late pick of children, the employee must inform their immediate supervisor of the situation as soon as possible following the overtime hours. Employees who do not seek prior approval for working overtime will be subject to non-payment for unauthorized overtime hours and/or disciplinary action up to and including termination.

## Pay Period

Starting Point Children's Center pays its employees every two weeks on every other Thursday. The checks received on Thursday cover the preceding two weeks ending on the last Friday. Checks are distributed beginning at 12:00 PM on Thursday. Employees with work hours ending before 12:00 PM may return to receive their checks or receive their checks the following day. Employees are encouraged to utilize direct deposit for the most efficient manner of receiving their pay check funds.

## Staff Meetings

Staff meetings are one of the best avenues for the exchange of ideas and the sharing of information. The meetings will be arranged by the suggestion of the staff or the Director. It is important that all staff members attend. Suggestions for change, improvements, etc., are always welcomed from the staff and interpreted as positive input. Regular staff meetings will be scheduled throughout the year with at least a 7 day advance notice. Unless otherwise specified, your attendance at staff meetings is mandatory. Any absence from a staff meeting must be approved, in advance, by the director. Employees will be paid for meetings in which their attendance is required.

## Training

As required by licensing regulations and or Starting Point Children's Center employees will from time to time, attend trainings, meeting and/or conferences to meet Professional Development/Training Hours.

- 24 hours of pre-service training must be completed by new staff without previous experience in a regulated childcare facility (8 hours before counted in ratio, 16 hours by 90 days).
- All new staff must be oriented in the requirements in the Minimum Standards Handbook, the facility's child care policies, the procedures to follow in handling emergencies and exits, and the use and location of all fire extinguishers. Emergency Maps and Exits will be displayed throughout the Center.
- All staff must obtain at least 24 hours of training annually, exclusive of CPR and First Aid, selected from the following areas:
  - Child Development
  - Care of Children with Special Needs
  - Adult and Child Health
  - Nutrition and Safety
  - Curriculum-Planning
  - Risk Management
  - Identification and Care of ill Children
  - Recognition of Child Abuse, Neglect and Sexual Abuse
  - Responsibility of reporting any incidents
  - Cultural Diversity
  - Professional Development
- Employees with less than 2 years of experience in a registered facility must obtain an additional 24 hours of training during the first year of employment.

Note: It is the responsibility of each employee to pay for any costs that may result from these trainings (full or part-time), unless otherwise arranged with Management.

## Phone Calls and Cell Phones

Starting Point Children’s Center does not have a designated phone line. Personal phone calls should be kept to a minimum and made only with the permission of the person in charge. Whenever possible you will be summoned for incoming calls, however, at the discretion of the person answering the calls, a message may be taken. You may return the call at the earliest convenience.

It is crucial that every employee’s full attention remains on the children enrolled at Starting Point Children’s Center at all times, for both educational and safety reasons. Personal cell phones are not permitted in any of the classrooms or on the playground.

**Cell phone use is not permitted while on duty to provide child care and child supervision. All personal cell phones shall be stored in the front office while employees are on duty.**

The use of personal cell phones during the school day is permitted only a) during approved breaks, b) outside the classroom, and c) outside the presence of the children at the Center. Employees may not use their personal cell phones for talking, texting, checking voicemail, or any other purpose—while caring for children enrolled at the Center or while in the presence of children enrolled at the Center.

When classes *leave the premises* for any reason (walk, field trip, etc.), one employee per group may carry a personal cell phone to be used only in the event of an emergency.

In the case of an urgent situation that necessitates an employee’s immediate access to a cell phone, the employee must try to obtain permission from the Director or designated employee before bringing the cell phone into the classroom. The cell phone must be set to “vibrate.” Calls may be answered only after a substitute has arrived to replace the employee, and only outside of the classroom. Ratios must be maintained at all times. Violation of this policy may result in a verbal and/or written warning, and up to termination depending on the circumstances of the violation.

## Lunch Period

Lunch periods and breaks will vary. You are expected to cooperate with your Director in taking lunch periods and breaks at a time where there will be no interference with the children. Lunch breaks are normally one hour, unless otherwise scheduled by the director. Employees should clock-out when they go to lunch and clock-in when they return from lunch and return to work.

## Meals

Your own meals are to be eaten in the lounge or in other areas where no children are present. You are to clock out for your lunch break unless otherwise authorized by the manager to work through the break. When the Center is serving family style meals, staff is expected to participate by eating with the class during mealtime in order to model appropriate behavior, nutritional choices and manners. You are expected to only eat Center food that is offered to all children in your care while in the presence of children. If you bring food from home or order out, please consume such food on your break away from the children. You would not want someone to eat something that smells delicious in your presence and not offer to share the food with you. Always avoid drinking hot beverages around the children to avoid possible burns. Any beverages other than those being offered to children must be consumed from a closed container and kept away from the children. (Please remember to keep respect for all of the children in your care.)

## **Smoking**

State regulations and the policy of Starting Point Children's Center prohibit smoking at the facility, during transportation, or on field trips. Staff who do smoke must do so off the premises of Starting Point Children's Center and out of view of children, parents, and staff members.

## **Glass Containers**

Employees are prohibited from using any glass container such as plates, drinking cups etc. while caring for children or in an area occupied by children. Plastic or paper cups and dishes must be used.

## **Emergency Contacts**

It is important that your employee file contain all information necessary should an emergency occur. Please notify the director if there are changes in emergency contacts, doctor's name and phone number, allergies, or any other pertinent medical and emergency information.

## **Name Address and Telephone Numbers**

Our records should always contain current personal information so that we may reach you if necessary, either by phone or mail. Report any changes in your name, address, telephone number and emergency contact to the director so that your file is properly undated. Should your employment with Starting Point Children's Center cease for any reason, it is important to notify Starting Point Children's Center of any address change for receiving your W-2 at year end.

## **Attendance**

Because of the nature of our business, you must report to work on time. If you are unable to report to work or see that you are going to be late, notify the director or designated employee in advance, prior to the start of your work schedule. You must give sufficient notice so that a substitute may be called to cover your shift. If you are going to be late or miss work for any reason, you must notify Starting Point Children's Center personally. **Do not allow a friend or relative to call for you.** An attendance record which includes frequent tardiness and/or absences, regardless of the reason, may be considered cause for dismissal.

Unlike many other businesses, your work cannot wait for your return. Someone must always be with our children, and you have accepted this responsibility.

## **Illness**

To protect the children and your fellow staff, you may not come to work at Starting Point Children's Center if you have a contagious illness or disease. In certain instances, a physician's release may be necessary before returning to Starting Point Children's Center.

## **Employee Related Accidents**

In order to protect your claim for compensation and/or minimize Starting Point Children's Center and its employees' liability, all injuries or accidents occurring during employment, no matter how minor, must be reported to Center's Director immediately.

All employees are covered by Workers Compensation Insurance and must seek treatment for accidents and injuries as required by the plan. Employees will be required to provide information regarding the accident or injury to their immediate supervisor within. Employees who are placed on Workers Compensation will be notified in writing of the status of the position, status of health insurance benefits, and their responsibilities while on Workers Compensation.

Accidents or injuries involving children must be reported immediately to the Center's Director. Employees will be required to complete accident/injury reports for these incidents. Employees will be advised by Center's Director to call the child's parents to apprise them of the incident/accident as necessary. A parent is required to sign the accident/injury report within 48 hours following the incident/accident. A copy of the signed accident/injury report will be given to the child's parent and a copy should be given to the Center's Director. These documents will become a part of the child's record. Minor accidents involving children must be documented using Starting Point Children's Center Accident/Incident Report form. Child name, date, details regarding the incident, affected body part hurt (if applicable), number of children and staff present and teacher administering care must be noted. Parents shall be notified by pick up of the same day in which accident/incident occurred. A signed/dated copy of the report will be retained in child's file.

Accidents involving parents or visitors must be reported immediately to the Center's Director. Employees will be required to complete accident/injury reports for these incidents. The accident/injury report should be given to the Center's Director. These documents will become part of the agency's record. Any employee who fails to appropriately report, or files a false accident/injury report will be subject to disciplinary action up to and including termination.



## **Minimum Standards for Childcare**

- Minimum Standards for Childcare
- State Ratios

## Minimum Standards for Child Care

All staff is expected to be knowledgeable of Texas Department of Family & Protective Services (DFPS) Minimum Standards for Child Care. Failure to adhere to these policies may result in disciplinary action, up to and including termination.

- Employees must visit [https://www.dfps.state.tx.us/Child\\_Care/Child\\_Care\\_Standards\\_and\\_Regulations/](https://www.dfps.state.tx.us/Child_Care/Child_Care_Standards_and_Regulations/) and familiarize with the Child Care Minimum Standards
- Each staff member in our facility must execute and submit a completed Texas Department of Protective and Regulatory Services Affidavit for applicants for employment.
- Each staff member must have current training in first aid with rescue breathing and choking and CPR for infants and children.
- Staff in our childcare Center must be at least 18 years of age and have a high school diploma or its equivalent. Note: A 16-year-old that attends school can work as childcare assistant.
- Each staff member must provide a statement informing the facility about any of the offenses listed in Appendix II in the Minimum Standards Handbook or the Texas Controlled Substance Act.

## State Ratios

State ratios are important indicators of quality. Starting Point Children's Center strives to keep State ratios at all times. Please be sure that you always adhere to the State ratios.

- Make sure that you receive additional help when the number of children approaches over limit.
- Ratio adherence is a dual responsibility between teachers and management.
- Never leave your group without any emergency assistance.
- Call the front desk for assistance when you need to leave the group and the total number of children in attendance exceeds the State ratio.

**Visitors**

- Visitors
- Security

## Visitors

**All visitors must present a photo ID prior to being admitted into the building.**

Starting Point Children's Center has various visitors to Starting Point Children's Center on a regular basis. Some visitors are expected but most drop by unannounced. If we know in advance of a special person coming to Starting Point Children's Center, we will advise you. Each staff should be aware that parents, potential customers and representatives from the regulatory agencies might be observing them at any given time. It is important that staff continue their normal daily routines so those visitors can have an opportunity to see exactly what occurs in a typical classroom or playground situation.

**When visitors are in the building, we ask that no staff leave the building without first consulting with the Director or Designated employee, even if your shift has ended.**

Visitors are not permitted in the classrooms or playground without an office person. If you see a stranger or unfamiliar face wandering, report it to the Director IMMEDIATELY. If you have the slightest concern, always report it to the Director, Designated employee, or person in charge.

Personal friends, relatives or acquaintances not affiliated with Starting Point Children's Center are not permitted in the classrooms or on the playground. We discourage personal friends and family from visiting you at Starting Point Children's Center, unless there is an emergency, or as previously authorized by Director, Designated employee, or Owner.

## Security

If you observe unfamiliar or suspicious looking persons in or about Starting Point Children's Center, notify the Director or person in charge immediately. Do not leave the children unattended, and do not allow the children to communicate or approach such a person. If an unfamiliar or suspicious looking/acting person approaches the children on the playground, immediately escort the children inside and notify the Director or person in charge.

If an animal of any kind approaches the children, do not allow the children to pet or play with the animal. Escort the children inside and notify the Director or person in charge immediately.

# Employee Benefits

- F.I.C.A.
- Unemployment Insurance (FUTA)
- Workers' Compensation
- Referral Bonus
- Paid Holidays
- Paid Meetings
- Workshops, Seminars, Conventions
- Vacations
- First Aid / CPR / Finger Printing
- Care of Employee's Children
- Jury Duty and Witness Duty
- Leave without Pay
- Military Service Leave

## **F.I.C.A. (Social Security @ 6.2 % and Medicare @ 1.45%)**

Each employee is required to contribute a portion of their income to the social security administration for social security and Medicare benefits. In addition, Starting Point Children's Center is required to match those funds and contribute that amount on your behalf.

## **Unemployment Insurance (FUTA)**

Starting Point Children's Center provides Unemployment Insurance at no cost to the employee. Employees will not be eligible for unemployment insurance if they voluntarily quit without good cause or are discharged for misconduct connected with work. This insurance is provided through the Texas Workforce Commission.

## **Workers' Compensation**

Starting Point Children's Center pays for your Workers' Compensation Insurance at no cost to the employees. Employees may be eligible for workers' compensation if they are injured in a job-related accident and are unable to work.

## **Referral Bonuses**

Employees will receive a \$100.00 bonus if they refer and effectively enroll a new family to Starting Point Children's Center and such family stays enrolled for at least 90 days and is in good standing. Bonuses will be paid to employees immediately after the 90-day period.

## **Paid Holidays**

Hourly employees will receive their regular paid hours for the holidays listed below. If the holiday falls while you are taking vacation leave, the holiday will automatically be given in lieu of the vacation day. If you fail to work your last scheduled workday prior to the holiday or the first scheduled workday after a holiday, you will forfeit the holiday pay. Exceptions will be made for pre-approved vacation, if the Director sends you home early or asks that you not come in, accident or illness as evidenced by written certification by a physician, or other proof requested by Starting Point Children's Center. Employees will be paid for the holiday only if the holiday falls on a weekday and Starting Point Children's Center is closed in observance of the holiday. Employees who have not completed their initial 90-day probationary period are not eligible for holiday pay.

- New Year's Day
- Memorial Day
- Independence Day
- Labor Day
- Thanksgiving Day
- Christmas Day

## **Paid Meetings**

Hourly employees who attend meetings called during the day from 6:30 AM - 6:30 PM will remain on payroll. It is expected that all staff will attend Staff Meetings and other Center sponsored activities during and after hours, provided previous notice is given. A 7-day notice will be given for all meetings or events for which you are required to attend. Employees will be paid for meeting and events for which their attendance is required.

## **Workshops, Seminars, Conventions**

Starting Point Children's Center will pay from 0% to 100% of costs incurred by an employee who attends workshops, seminars, conventions etc. The amount of reimbursement is decided at the sole discretion of the director or Owner and depends on circumstances including but not limited to cost, content, place, time, accumulated training hours to date, length of employment, performance evaluations and other factors. Amount of reimbursement will be decided prior to registration or payment. Starting Point Children's Center may pay for the training in advance or reimburse the employee after proof of attendance is provided.

Starting Point Children's Center is not required and will not pay employees for the hours they spend while attending workshops, seminars, conventions, or other training related functions. Employees will only be paid for such events if Starting Point Children's Center requires their attendance.

For reimbursement, the employees must:

1. Receive advance approval for time, cost, and content.
2. Provide verification that training was attended and completed.
3. Provide paid receipt for cost of training.

## **Vacations**

Each employee will accrue vacation time at a rate of 2% of hours worked (For example, for a total of 100 hours worked you will accrue 2 hours of vacation time.) Vacation time will accrue from your first day of employment, however, you are not eligible to use this time until after your initial 90-day provisional period is completed. Upon resignation or termination from Starting Point Children's Center, you may request, **in writing**, to be paid for the remaining balance of your accrued vacation time. Request must be received by 6:30 PM, on the Friday preceding the next payday. Employees who do not complete their 90-day provisional period are not eligible to receive payment for accrued vacation. **Employees who do not provide at least a 2 weeks written notice of resignation will forfeit any accrued vacation time and will not be paid for those hours.**

## **First Aid / CPR / Finger Printing**

Employee's First Aid and CPR certificates are property of Starting Point Children's Center, unless paid by the employee. Fingerprinting expense will be a 50/50 split cost between Starting Point Children's Center and the employee. After 90 days of employment, there will be no cost to the employee for fingerprinting. If employee works for less than 90 days, 100% of the cost will be deducted from the last paycheck.

## **Care of Employee's Children**

Starting Point Children's Center allows employees to enroll their children in the program. Under most circumstances, an employee who has a child enrolled in the Center where she or he is employed will be prohibited from providing direct care to her or his child.

Starting Point Children's Center will attempt to provide reduced child care services to employees' children as budget and circumstances may allow. Employees seeking to enroll a child(ren) in the program must discuss placement and possible tuition benefits with the Director. Starting Point Children's Center reserves the right to limit the number of employee's children receiving reduced rate child care services at the Center at any time.

Payment for the employee's child care services will be deducted directly from the employee's pay check. This is deducted "PRE-TAX". Employees will be required to complete a form authorizing Starting Point Children's Center to deduct the cost of their child care from their paycheck.

Starting Point Children's Center further reserves the right to dis-enroll an employee's child(ren) if the employee's performance is affected by having their child(ren) at the Center. Employees must remember they are employed to perform a specific job description and must not allow themselves to be distracted by having their child(ren) enrolled in the program. The employee must not interfere with the supervision or authority of their child(ren)'s classroom teacher.

Starting Point Children's Center will not provide continued care to the children of terminated employees. Employees who resign under favorable circumstances and are eligible for consideration for re-hire must discuss the continued enrollment of their child with the Center's Director. Starting Point Children's Center will determine in its sole discretion whether continued enrollment of an employee who has resigned is permitted on a case by case basis.

## **Jury Duty and Witness Duty**

### **Jury Duty**

When a leave of absence must be taken for jury duty, Starting Point Children's Center will recognize this leave without leave pay. Proof of jury duty must be submitted to the Director by the end of the pay period in which the employee serves. Employees must notify their immediate supervisor as soon as possible after they receive notice they are called for Jury Duty. A copy of the official request to serve should be provided to Director upon notification.

## **Witness Duty**

When a leave of absence must be taken to answer a subpoena in court, Starting Point Children's Center will recognize this leave without pay. Proof of the subpoena must be submitted to the Director as soon as possible.

## **Leave without Pay**

Work schedules have been established giving consideration to the student/teacher ratio, workloads, and coverage requirements. Employee absences have a detrimental effect on these conditions. While absence for illness and emergency situations may happen from time to time, employees will not be granted leave beyond their accrued vacation, sick, and personal leave as a standard practice. Emergency circumstances will be considered on a case by case basis. Leave without pay will only be granted in extenuating circumstances. Leave without pay must be approved in advance of the requested start date of the leave by your immediate supervisor. Requests must be submitted in writing. Employees will receive notice of the approval/denial for leave of absence in writing. Leave which has not been approved by your supervisor will be considered a voluntary termination.

## **Military Service Leave**

In accordance with the Uniformed Services Employment and Re-employment Right Act (USERRA), Starting Point Children's Center will not discriminate against any person in any employment action based upon military service, application for military service and/or other military obligation. Employees requiring leave under this policy must notify Starting Point Children's Center immediately upon receiving military orders that a Military Service Leave will be needed. Employees returning from Military Service Leave must report for duty within 5 days of discharge. Employee returning from Military Service Leave will be returned to their former or comparable position. The returning employees status, pay and benefits will be the same upon return as they would have been had the employee not been called to active duty. If qualifications for the former position have changed during the Military Service Leave, Starting Point Children's Center will make a reasonable attempt at re-training the returning employee so they may become qualified for the position. If an employee is dishonorably discharged from military service they are no longer protected under USERRA and any and all rights guaranteed there under are forfeited.

## Operating Information and Procedures

- Audio/Video Monitoring
- Telephone Etiquette
- Prospective Families
- New Students
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- Children Entering/Leaving Classroom
- Classroom Parties
- Teachers Leaving Class
- Care
- Complaints from Parents
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- Naptime Supervision
- Outside Play
- Classroom Environment
- Roll Sheets
- Playground Rules
- Accident Report Forms
- First Aid Boxes
- Medication
- Garbage
- Staff Bulletin Boards
- Office Equipment

# Operating Information and Procedures

## Audio / Video Monitoring

Each room in Starting Point Children’s Center is monitored by a video cameras equipped with audio. Rooms are monitored on a constant and continual basis. The activities of the room and other public areas of Starting Point Children’s Center may be recorded for evaluation, documentation, safety and training.

## Telephone Etiquette

When answering phones for Starting Point Children’s Center, employees should answer with a simple greeting. Good examples of greetings include:

- “Hello. Thank you for calling Starting Point Children’s Center, how may I help you today?”
- “Hello. This is Starting Point Children’s Center how can I help you?”
- “Thank you for calling Starting Point Children’s Center, how may I help you?”

Employees should answer any questions the caller may have with a friendly and helpful tone, to ensure that callers feel at ease. If you do not know the answer to a caller’s question, you should tell them politely to hold on while you find the answer to their question.

If the caller is inquiring about enrollment:

- Write down their name and call back number in case the call is disconnected.
- Tell them politely to hold so that you may transfer their call to the Director or designated employee.

At the end of the conversation, employees should always ask callers if they have any more questions, or if employees can offer more assistance to them. After all questions or concerns have been answered or addressed, employees should end the conversation with a pleasant and genuine closing, such as one of the following:

- “Thank you for calling Starting Point Children’s Center, have a great day!”
- “It was a pleasure helping you today, have a good day.”

## Prospective Families

All prospective parent / family should be encouraged to tour the facility and learn about every aspect of Starting Point Children’s Center (curriculum, rates, etc.). The Director or designated employee will be responsible for scheduling and conducting facility tours. All prospective families should be treated fairly and respectfully, making every effort to accommodate enrollment. Welcome package including marketing and enrollment information should be provided to the prospective families.

## **New Students**

In addition to the normal and customary greeting, all staff members need to exert an extra effort to greet and welcome new students and parents. It is important to reassure every child and parent that Starting Point Children's Center is a friendly place to be and he/she is welcomed.

## **Supervision of Children**

Each employee carries a responsibility for supervision of children when needed, not only in his or her own classroom but also wherever he or she may be on Starting Point Children's Center grounds. Such responsibility is not limited to time or areas of specific duty assignments, but to the entire Center. The standard of behavior will be the result of the cooperation of all staff members in sharing responsibility for maintaining behavior.

## **Children Entering and Leaving Classroom**

Children should not leave the classroom during class time without the teacher's consent. The teachers should use common sense and discretion in allowing children to leave; being certain that there is another adult responsible for the children's safety and supervision. Hall or bathroom passes should be used when children leave the room unattended. A pass is a visible indicator that allows other staff to know that the child has permission to leave the room.

## **Classroom Parties**

Occasionally, Starting Point Children's Center will have classroom parties to celebrate special holidays throughout the year. In addition, parents may coordinate a classroom event in celebration of their child's birthday. All such events must be arranged with the director prior to the date of the celebration. Teachers are expected to help and if necessary conduct these celebrations as a part of their job duties.

## **Teachers Leaving Class**

Teachers are not to leave their classrooms during class time except in cases of extreme emergency. Searching for equipment, supplies, etc., is not considered an emergency. Should you be required to leave your classroom, you must ask the Director, designated employee of a staff member not in charge of a classroom to watch your class. Teachers should never leave a room unsupervised or unattended.

## **Care**

All children, parents and visitors should be treated with kindness, friendliness, patience, and respect. Staff should refrain from gossip, loud talking and other unnecessary noise and forms of conduct that could disturb the Program and detract from the professionalism of the school. Yelling is not permitted.

## **Complaints from Parents**

All complaints or concerns from parents must be reported immediately by the staff member receiving the information/complaint to the Director.

## **Communication with Parents**

The Director or its designated employee must approve all written communication to parents before being sent home. When sending home holiday cards, gifts, etc., please check and find out the family structure. Many of our children are from single-parent families, and it is not appropriate for them to bring things home addressed to MOM & DAD. The Director can supply you with family information.

We encourage you to communicate with parents in a positive, friendly, and informative manner. Parents enjoy hearing about the children's activities and enjoy a conversation with their children's teachers. When speaking to parents remember that the supervision of your class is still your primary responsibility.

It is contrary to the interest of Starting Point Children's Center and those we serve to give out any information regarding other children and their parents. Such information should be held in strict confidence and should not be discussed with anyone outside Starting Point Children's Center. Within Starting Point Children's Center, such information should be discussed only when it will benefit the care we offer the children and parents. Refer any inquiries on children, their performance, and parents to the Director or its designated employee.

Staff members may not provide parents with information of a negative or controversial matter concerning the children, staff, or Center. The Director or Designated employee must relay all information of a negative matter to the parent. Only with prior permission or authorization may you speak to a parent concerning negative or controversial information.

## **Supply and Material Requests**

Starting Point Children's Center will make every effort to provide you with the supplies, materials, and support needed for you to do your job in a professional manner. If material or supplies are not available, please notify the Director or its designated employee regarding the items you need and the date that you need the items. Requests should be made in advance to allow ample time for the material or supplies to be purchased.

## **Naptime Supervision**

Nap at Starting Point Children's Center is generally between 12:00 and 2:30 PM. During this time, you are on the payroll and you should be rubbing backs, reading stories, or working on lesson plans or bulletin boards. You are not to be watching TV, doing homework, reading books, newspapers, or magazines (unless specifically related to your job) or conducting activities not related to the benefit of the children or Center. Children should be changed or can use the restroom and wash their hands prior to going down for nap.

## **Outside Time**

Several times throughout the day your class will have the opportunity to use the outside playground. Before exiting the building your room should be neat, clean, and all toys and supplies picked up and put away. Attendance should be taken immediately before exiting the building and immediately upon return to the building.

Outside time is an opportunity for the children to run, climb, play games, and exert energy. It is your responsibility to plan and participate in activities and games with the children. Be alert to dangerous situations, and be sure to position yourself in an area that you can adequately supervise the entire playground. Teachers are not permitted to bring chairs onto the playground. Instead, walk around, play games, encourage them to run and climb.

Before returning to the classroom, be sure that no clothing or other articles are left on the playground and that all trash is picked up and thrown away.

## **Classroom Environment**

Teachers are responsible for keeping a neat, clean classroom environment. It is suggested that children's work be displayed as a regular part of the curriculum. There should be other bulletin boards and displays that will reflect what is happening with the children and make the room an inviting place to be.

## **Roll Sheets**

A roll sheet is a legal document and should be treated as such. It is not to be left lying around or taken home. It is an accurate recording of children in each room and their absences. It is used to account for children in case of emergencies and is used to calculate tuition charges. The roll sheet should be kept on the clipboard in an accessible and visible location. It is your responsibility to accurately record the attendance of each child and to maintain an accurate count of children in your care at all times.

## **Playground Rules**

Adequate discussion with the children prior to going onto the playground about what is expected is essential. Different rules will apply to different age levels, and each teacher is expected to use common sense in determining these. If there is a question, check with the Director.

During playground time, it is important that teachers observe the activities of the children at all times. Teachers should not sit in one location, but rather observe the children by walking around and interacting with them. Planned activities and games should be planned for a short period for each playground period.

## **Accident Report Forms**

In the case of an accident resulting in an injury or potential injury to a child, you should first attend to the child. You should always notify the Director or Designated employee who will notify the child's parent. If a child incurs any type of injury, even a scraped knee or small bump or bruise, it is important that you report the injury to the Director or Designated employee immediately. You may be asked to complete an accident report form giving the details of the incident. These forms are available at the office. *If you should become ill or injured while working, report the incident to the Director or designated employee immediately.*

## **First Aid Boxes**

Starting Point Children's Center has a first aid box located in the kitchen area. These supplies are to be used for minor scrapes, splinters, cuts etc. Be sure to report the injury to the Director or Designated employee and if necessary complete an accident report form. If you are unsure of the procedures for treating a minor scrape, cut etc. let the Director or Designated employee know so that they may treat the injury.

## **Medication**

All medication administered to children must be authorized and administered by the Director or its designated employee. All medication must be stored in a secured area and out of reach of the children. Prior to administering medication, parents must fill out an Authorization for Medication Form. No medication will be given to children contrary to the medications labeled instructions unless a licensed physician provides written authorization. Under no circumstances should medication of any type be in the classroom. If you discover medication in the classroom, remove the medication immediately and notify the Director or its designated employee.

## **Garbage**

Classroom trash is to be emptied each evening prior to closing the room. After lunch and at other times during the day it may be necessary for teachers to empty trash more often. Trash in rooms that have diaper-changing facilities should be emptied as often as necessary. Please accept the responsibility for collecting and emptying trash whenever necessary.

## **Staff Bulletin Boards**

Starting Point Children's Center has a bulletin board designated specifically for staff notices. Starting Point Children's Center's Director will show you where this is located. It is your responsibility to check this bulletin board for important notices and other important staff information.

## **Office Equipment**

Please do not use any equipment whose operation you do not fully understand. Ask for assistance if you cannot operate the equipment properly.

## Classroom Discipline

- Guidelines for Child Discipline

# Classroom Discipline

Classroom discipline is largely the responsibility of the classroom teacher. We realize that degrees of discipline vary regarding the nature and severity of the activity concerned as well as the age and maturity of the child. However, all activities that are successful require order and self-restraint. Whenever a situation arises that requires aid from the office, don't hesitate to ask. The Director or its designated employee will always be available to help you with difficult children.

## Guidelines for Child Discipline

1. No corporal or physical punishment will be used or the threat of such.
2. Set limits or behavior expectations which are developmentally appropriate.
3. Be consistent.
4. Act with confidence, fairness, and patience in disciplining.
5. Praise and encourage good behavior, recognizing that you serve as a role model for appropriate actions.
6. State suggestions or directions in a positive form. Give a child a choice only when you intend to accept the choice.
7. Focus on the child's actions rather than personality. Make the child feel worthwhile and liked.
8. Use a kind, firm voice when disciplining. Use words and a tone of voice which will help the child feel confident and reassured.
9. Consequences for misbehavior will be immediate, and have short duration and are related to the act.
10. Punishment is appropriate only for repeated misbehavior. Acceptable punishments are removing the child from one play area to another, limiting play privileges, and using time out.
11. Punishment will not be associated with food, naps, or bathroom procedures.
12. Keep acts of misbehavior in perspective. We will involve the child's parents in the disciplinary process only when uncontrollable behavior and/or behavior harmful to others persists.
13. Remember the goal of discipline is helping the child gain self-control through learning appropriate behavior rather than forcing the child to conform to adult standards.

The objective of the childcare Center is to provide quality childcare and preschool education services to the community. In doing so, you must realize the importance of discipline and its effect on the children we serve.

Your duty is to adhere to the child discipline policies, to help others learn and follow it and to report any violation of this policy. *Please remember that you must follow this policy when disciplining your own children who may be enrolled or in attendance at Starting Point Children's Center.*

## Safety

- Safety Policy
- Accidents
- Vehicles / Transporting Children
- Procedures for Medical Emergencies
- Procedures in Case of Fire
- Procedure in Case of Power Failure or Explosion
- Emergency Plan for Tornado/Hurricane
- Shelter Location
- Release of Children

# Safety Policy

Starting Point Children's Center is very concerned about your safety and the safety of the children in our care. Every caution must be taken to guard against accidents to children and staff. It is the responsibility of every staff member to correct unsafe conditions such as liquid, food, paper, extension cords, children's clothes, toys on floor, etc. Report all unsafe conditions and fire hazards immediately if you are unable to correct them.

It is important for you to cooperate in helping prevent injury to yourself, to other employees, to the children and to visitor by observing the following rules:

1. Familiarize yourself with the medical, fire, tornado, hurricane, and disaster plans of Starting Point Children's Center.
2. Report any unsafe conditions immediately. If you recognize or observe a potential hazardous situation or condition, either correct the problem or report it immediately to your supervisor.
3. All electrical outlets must be covered when not in use.
4. Company vehicles may not be driven by anyone under 21 years of age. Employees driving company vehicle must have the following
  - A. a current Texas drivers license with applicable commercial rating if necessary,
  - B. a satisfactory driving record (approval from the insurance carrier necessary),
  - C. a sound knowledge of the vehicle and driving regulation,
  - D. demonstrate competence and confidence in operating the vehicle.
5. For the safety and security of the children and the staff, Starting Point Children's Center requires a minimum of two staff members in Starting Point Children's Center when children are present.
6. All cleaning supplies must be stored out of the reach of children. Every container must be clearly labeled with the contents identified. Notify the Director or its designated employee if a label has been removed or worn.

## Accidents

All accidents must be reported immediately to the Director or its designated employee. Accident(s) reports must be written, signed by the Employee and the Director, given to parents, and copied for the child's file. Close supervision of children is the best anecdote to accidents. Use risk management to keep the environment safe and hazard free. Starting Point Children's Center strives to provide the best in equipment, that is kept maintained, and in overall good working conditions, so all children will be safe in the classroom or playground areas. Safety is a joint effort of all staff and employees requiring all of us to become risk managers.

## Emergency Closings

In any emergency the safety and security of the children and employees is of the utmost concern. Starting Point Children's Center requires that all employees act in a professional and calm manner in the face of any emergency. Further, it is expected that all employees will attend to the safety and security of the children throughout an emergency scenario.

Due to severe weather conditions or other emergency situations, there may be times when the Starting Point Children's Center facilities may be closed. Emergency closing is at the discretion of the Owner.

Severe Weather Conditions: In the event of severe weather conditions, Starting Point Children's Center will generally follow the School District in determining whether or not to close the Centers. Employees are hereby instructed to contact Center's Directors for further instructions.

Other Emergencies: Other situations, including but not limited to, electrical power failure, lack of water, lack of heat or air conditioning, hazardous road conditions, or other situations which may endanger the safety or health of children and employees, may result in Starting Point Children's Center being closed at the discretion of the Owner. Employees will be advised of their obligations in these situations. In the event of emergency closing in the middle of the day, supervisory staff will instruct employees regarding their responsibilities during the emergency. Employees will be required to remain at the Center as long as there are children present. This may require employees to remain after normal closing hours. Employees must be mindful that compliance with Licensing Regulations must be maintained even in emergency situations. Supervisory staff will inform employees when they released to go home. Employees who refuse to cooperate during an emergency situation will be subject to disciplinary action up to and including termination.

## Employee Pay during Emergency Closings

Exempt and Non-Exempt employees will not be paid for days when Starting Point Children's Center is closed due to inclement weather or other emergency situation. Employees may choose to use accrued paid leave time if they wish to be paid. Employees must complete a paid leave request form on or before the last day of the pay period in which the emergency closing occurs and submit it to the Center's Director. When the Center closes after opening for the day, non-exempt employees will be paid only for the hours they actually work. Non-exempt employees may choose to use accrued paid leave time for the balance of the regular work schedule when sent home due to inclement weather or other emergency situation. Exempt employees who report to work and are sent home due to inclement weather or other emergency will be compensated for the entire day. If an employee does not have accrued paid leave time, the employee will not be eligible for pay during inclement weather or other emergency closings as indicated in the above paragraphs.

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## PROCEDURES FOR MEDICAL EMERGENCIES

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- Teacher in charge will assume responsibility for children injured while in his or her care.
- If the child has fallen from a high place, do not move the child unless there is a life-threatening situation
- The staff responsible for the child will administer first aid as trained. If additional medical attention is required (or the Teacher is unsure), the Teacher will bring the child into Director's office if possible. If child can not be moved, Teacher will send a fellow staff member for the person in charge.
- Teacher will inform the Director or person in charge of the injury.
- The Director will evaluate the injury and decide if professional medical attention is required.
- If professional attention is not required, Director or Teacher will administer proper first aid as required.
- If professional medical attention is necessary, Director or Designated employee will call parent and maintain control of the child until parent arrives, or
- If emergency medical attention is necessary, the Director or Designated employee will call for emergency transport, call the parent, and call the child's doctor. Director or Designated employee will stay with the child until child is in the care of a doctor or parent. Director or Designated employee will go with the child to the Hospital and provide them with the Release and Authorization for Emergency Care signed by the parent, and any other medical or personal information that is necessary.

If the Teacher, Director, or any other person is unsure of the extent of the injury or illness call for emergency assistance by dialing 911. Information about Starting Point Children's Center and location is located next to the phone.

**The primary objective in any emergency is the safety and well being of the children. If you suspect the children or a child is in danger, dial 911 immediately for assistance.**

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## PROCEDURES IN CASE OF FIRE

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- Person discovering fire or suspicion of fire will sound fire alarm or send assistant to do so.
- Each teacher will secure his or her classroom role sheet and quietly and quickly evacuate the children from the building.
- Director or Designated employee will proceed to the infant room to help evacuate the youngest children from Starting Point Children's Center. The Director or Designated employee will secure the enrollment forms and emergency contact numbers for each child if possible
- Each teacher must immediately check roll upon exiting the building and relocating to a safe area.
- Teacher will maintain control of their children until relieved by another teacher or told to return to the building
- After Starting Point Children's Center is evacuated the Director or Designated employee will check each room and restroom to be sure all children and staff have been evacuated.
- If a Staff member or Director suspects fire, call 911 immediately for assistance. Information about Starting Point Children's Center and location is located next to the phone.

**The primary objective in any emergency is the safety and well being of the children. If you suspect the children or a child is in danger, dial 911 immediately for assistance.**

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## PROCEDURES IN CASE OF POWER FAILURE OR EXPLOSION

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- Teacher will calm the children and maintain control of their class.
- Staff will remain in the room until told otherwise by the Director.
- If possible, and with the approval of the Director, teachers should secure role sheets and escort the children to the exterior of the building, space and weather permitting.
- Director or designated employee will call proper authorities to resolve the problem.
- If power is to be out for more than 2 hours, the Director or designated employee will call parents to pick up their children. Parents of the youngest children will be called first. **No children will be permitted to be dropped off if Starting Point Children's Center is without electrical power.**
- Director will use discretion in determining the period of the power outage. If the outage occurs during nap or pick-up times, the decision on whether to call parents should be made with those factors in mind. The safety and well being of children is the primary concern.

**The primary objective in any emergency is the safety and well being of the children. If you suspect the children or a child is in danger, dial 911 immediately for assistance.**

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## EMERGENCY PLAN FOR TORNADO/HURRICANE

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- Director or designated employee will inform staff of possible inclement weather.
- In the event of emergency, staff will escort children out of the classroom and into the hallway, or toward Starting Point Children’s Center of the building away from doors and windows. Staff will secure roll sheets and count children upon exiting the room.
- Should there be no warning, staff will instruct children to move under the tables and to remain there until she releases them.
- Director or Designated employee will secure emergency flashlights and observe weather conditions.
- Staff will calm and maintain control of the children, (songs, snack etc.) until danger has passed.
- Should damage occur or emergency help be required, the Director will phone the proper authorities. Children will remain in the hallway or under the tables until emergency personnel arrive.
  - a. Staff shall maintain control and account for each child.
  - b. Should evacuation be necessary, Director or Designated employee will secure the children's enrollment files.
- In the event of power failure or phone failure, it is the responsibility of the Director of Designated employee, or person designated by them to leave the premises and contact the proper authorities. This person should return immediately after notification,

**The primary objective in any emergency is the safety and well being of the children. If you suspect the children or a child is in danger, dial 911 immediately for assistance.**

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## EMERGENCY PLAN IN CASE OF MISSING CHILD

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Staff Member(s) should:

- Conduct a quick search of the immediate area
- Immediately Alert Management and other Staff Members
- Quick search of facility and surrounding area by Management and Staff
- Call 9-1-1

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## EMERGENCY PROCEDURE IN CASE OF FLOOD

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- The facility director or designee will advise all staff of the weather conditions that are approaching.
- The facility director or designee will monitor radio, television, or NOAA Weather Radio for weather updates.
- The facility director or designee will move records and valuable equipment to higher floors.
- Chemicals that are in the facility should be stored in locations where floodwaters cannot reach them.
- The facility director or designee will make transportation preparations to move children and staff if an evacuation is needed.
- The safe area to be evacuated to is:
  - Gleason Elementary School
  - 9203 Willowbridge Park Blvd, Houston, TX 77064
  - Phone: (281) 517-6800
  
- If evacuation is necessary and time permits, staff members or employees will unplug all electrical appliances.
- Evacuation will be facilitated by utilizing Starting Point Children’s Center’s vehicles and/or walking children to the location. Babies can be transported in designated cribs or baby buggies.
- Staff members should evacuate their personal vehicles once children are properly loaded into Center vehicles.

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## EMERGENCY PLAN IN CASE OF INTRUDER

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A potentially violent situation such as a hostage situation, disgruntled person, and unstable custody may be cause for a selective evacuation procedure. The premise behind a selective evacuation is that it enables large numbers of children and staff to stay out of harm's way when an individual is on-site who is potentially violent.

**If a potentially violent individual gains access to your facility and remains:**

- At alarm keypad enter the code: 2580 to activate silent alarm OR call 911 for assistance, seek advice from the 911 operator on how to handle the situation.
- Notify the person in charge if possible that you may have a condition for a selective evacuation. If you have any reason to believe the individual has a weapon, order a selective evacuation.
- Utilize the "all call" button on any available telephone to alert entire staff (use intruder "code words" if possible).
- Try to isolate the potential aggressor from as many adults and children as possible. Seek to draw the individual(s) to the office, break room, conference room, or other less populated area.
- If the individual has entered a classroom, seek to draw him into the least utilized portion of the room.
- Remain calm and be polite.
- Do not physically restrain or block their movement.
- While you are engaging the potentially violent individual, other available persons should direct unaffected classrooms to move to locations around the facility that are farthest from the incident point. This selective evacuation should precede room-by-room and as orderly and quietly as possible, being careful to use routes not visible to the incident point.
- Once the police arrive, listen, and follow their instructions promptly. If a decision is made to relocate to an alternate site, follow the appropriate evacuation procedures.
- If the individual cannot be isolated and chooses to leave the premises, allow them the freedom to exit making sure to note the make/model/license plate of vehicle and the direction of their travel.

**If a potentially violent individual gains access to your facility and leaves:**

- Immediately call 911/Police and communicate to the dispatcher the make/model/license plate of vehicle and the direction of their travel.
- Notify the Director or person in charge that you may have a condition for lock down or selective evacuation (this may be within the building if the potentially violent person does not leave the area).
- Utilize the "all call" button on any available telephone to alert entire staff (use intruder "code words" if possible).

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## EMERGENCY PROCEDURE IN CASE OF A HAZARDOUS CHEMICAL SPILL

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In general, the most dangerous chemicals located on the premises will be locked in a secure location. When handling chemicals, be sure to follow the instructions written on the product. Never mix products together.

- **Evacuate the area immediately** if a hazardous chemical is spilled.
- Do not turn any electrical switches on or off when exiting the room. Eliminate all open flames.
- Evacuate to an area upwind and uphill from the location of the spill if possible.
- The facility director or designee will contact 911 to provide notification of the hazardous materials spill.
- No person should try to contain, touch, or identify the hazardous material.
- Staff should not attempt to rescue anyone who has become unconscious due to fumes given off by the hazardous materials spill.
- If any child or staff member comes into contact with a hazardous material, the chemical should be washed off immediately with water.
- No person should enter the facility until authorized by *Fire Department Hazmat team*.

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## **EMERGENCY PROCEDURE IN CASE OF COMMUNICABLE DISEASE**

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- If the Director is notified or aware of a communicable disease the director will confirm, through reliable sources, the validity of the report.
- If confirmed and the disease is deemed reportable by the Texas Department of State Health Services, the director will notify the Texas Department of State Health Services- Infectious Disease Control Unit at 1-800-252-8239 providing all relative information requested from the State.
- The Director will notify all parents of children in Starting Point Children’s Center in writing and as soon as reasonably possible (but no later than 48 hours of becoming aware) that a child enrolled in Starting Point Children’s Center or an employee has contracted a communicable disease deemed notifiable by the Texas Department of State Health Services as specified in 25 TAC 97, Subchapter A (relating to Control of Communicable Diseases) and ask parents to observe their children for signs and symptoms of the disease.
- If a child in attendance show signs of illness, the ill child will be segregated from all children at the facility until parents are notified and the child is picked up from Starting Point Children’s Center.

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## SHELTER LOCATION

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In case of evacuation, children will be transported to:

Gleason Elementary School  
9203 Willowbridge Park Blvd, Houston, TX 77064  
Phone: (281) 517-6800

The evacuation destination will be used temporarily until parents can be notified to pick up their children.

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## RELEASE OF CHILDREN

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The policies of Starting Point Children's Center prohibit the release of a child to any person not indicated on the enrollment forms or indicated in writing by a parent. Children are not permitted to leave the premises directly from the playground or directly from the van or school bus. Children must leave through the building entrance with a parent or person authorized to pick them up. This policy will help to ensure that children are not released to unauthorized persons and will aid the Director or Designated employee in monitoring children's arrival and departure. If you should have any question concerning the release of a child, please speak to the Director or designated employee.

All persons, unfamiliar to Starting Point Children's Center, must be prepared to show a picture ID before picking up a child. If you are unfamiliar with a person picking up a child, please notify the Director, Designated employee, or person in charge immediately.

## Sanitation

1. Staff will ensure that children wash their hands with soap and running water after toileting and before eating. It is the responsibility of each staff member to ensure that children have available to them soap, water, and drying material (i.e. paper towels).
2. Staff must wash their hands with soap and running water:
  - Before eating or handling food or medication;
  - Before feeding a child;
  - After arriving at the childcare Center;
  - After diapering a child;
  - After assisting a child with toileting;
  - After personal toileting;
  - After handling or cleaning body fluids, such as after wiping noses, mouths, or bottoms, and tending sores;
  - After handling or feeding animals;
  - After outdoor activities;
  - After handling raw food products;
  - After eating or drinking, or smoking; and
  - After using any cleaners or toxic chemicals.
3. Staff must use disposable waterproof gloves when handling blood or other bodily fluids, which might contain blood.
4. When diapering a child, staff must place the child on a clean, washable surface disinfected after each use or a surface with clean, disposable covering that is changed after each use.
5. Staff must promptly change soiled or wet diapers.
6. Each child must be thoroughly cleaned with individual washcloths or disposable towelettes and dried with individual towels at each diaper change.

7. Each child must wash their hands with soap and water after toileting/diaper changing. For infants who are unable to wash their own hands - staff shall use a clean washcloth with soap and water to clean the child's hands. Note: wipes are not a substitute for this handwashing procedure.
8. Containers for used diapers must be kept in a sanitary manner.
9. Potty-chairs must be sanitized immediately after each child's use.
10. Each crib must be sanitized before a different child uses it and when soiled or as often as necessary.
11. Toys used by children under two years of age must be sanitized at least daily, and as often as necessary.
12. Staff with open wounds and/or injuries that inhibits hand washing, such as casts, bandages, or braces, will not prepare food or change diapers.

## Vehicles / Transporting Children

It is the policy of Starting Point Children's Center that all passengers, both adult and children, riding in a company vehicle or using their personal vehicle during Center business must use seat belts. No exceptions.

At our Center we:

- Transport to and from school
- Transport to and from off-site activities
- Transport in a case of an emergency, etc.

Our Center policies apply to the transportation of children to and from school, and to and from off-site activities. All vehicles used for transporting children to and from our Center will be currently registered and maintained in a clean and safe condition.

- No Cell Phone usage while driving the company vehicle including talking and texting.
- No child will be permitted to remain unattended in the vehicle.
- Children will remain seated while the vehicle is in motion.
- Keys will be removed from the vehicle at all times when the driver is not in the driver's seat.
- Smoking is prohibited in the vehicle when children are present.
- Each vehicle used will:
  - Be driven by an adult with a current state driver's license that authorizes the driver to operate the type of vehicle driven.
  - Contain a first aid kit and fire extinguisher.
  - Be equipped with individual, size-appropriate safety restraints (such as car seats and seat-belts) appropriate for the vehicle and installed and used correctly
  - Be enclosed
  - Be locked during transport
- For each enrolled child a transportation release form signed by the parent or guardian will be on-site at our Center.
- All driver must obey speed limits and driving laws.
- Personal business may not be conducted while transporting children to and from school or on excursions
- Never leave children in the vehicle alone.
- If there are delays or problems with transportation, parents or legal guardians will be notified within 30 minutes.
- For off-site activities all transportation policies apply.

- A transportation log shall be used each time children are boarded on and off any vehicle.
  - The teacher responsible for the group of children will generate the initial log/tracking sheet.
  - The driver will collect the log/tracking sheet and use them to take attendance before leaving to and from field trips.
  - After children exit the vehicle, the driver will walk to the back of the vehicle while checking each seat to ensure the vehicle is empty.
  - Driver will push “safety check button” installed at the back of the vehicle and return to the driver seat to remove the key.
  - If the keys are removed before the vehicle is checked, an alarm will sound preventing the driver from leaving without completely checking the vehicle.
- Vehicles may not go over 55 mph.

## Performance Evaluations

The Performance Appraisal should be a positive growth experience for the employee and supervisor. Performance Appraisals will be used to evaluate the entire period of employment since the employee's last appraisal. Performance Appraisals will be based strictly upon job performance. Job descriptions will be utilized as the basis for the appraisal.

Employees may receive a performance evaluation at the end of their initial 90-day introductory period. The evaluation will be based several factors which include overall employee performance, as defined in this Handbook and evaluated during the performance reviews, as well as classroom observation and other factors listed in the Staff Evaluation form below.

After the initial 90-day evaluation, employees will be evaluated approximately 9 months after the anniversary of their hire date and annually thereafter. This evaluation schedule is only a guide and evaluations may take place on or about the schedule mentioned above.

All employees will be given an opportunity at orientation to discuss their job descriptions to ensure that each employee understands her or his responsibilities and tasks. All employees will be given a copy of the Performance Appraisal form at this time. Supervisor(s) will monitor the employee's performance from time to time between formal Performance Appraisals. Supervisors will also present to employees the goals of the Center and their role in the successful attainment of these goals. Supervisors may also solicit input from other employees and/or parents who work closely with the employee being appraised. Employees must acknowledge receipt of the Performance Appraisal by signing the instrument indicating that they have received a copy. When an employee refuses to sign acknowledging receipt of the Performance Appraisal, another employee will witness the refusal by signing a statement verifying the employee's refusal to sign the Appraisal form. Any employee who refuses to sign acknowledging receipt of the Performance Appraisal will be subject to disciplinary action up to and including termination. Performance Appraisals will be forwarded to the Owner for review. All employees will receive a copy of their Performance Appraisal. Performance Appraisals will be placed in the employee's personnel record.

# STARTING POINT CHILDREN'S CENTER

## STAFF EVALUATION

Evaluation Date: \_\_\_\_\_ Evaluation Period: 3 Month      Annual

Employee Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Position: \_\_\_\_\_

Hire Date: \_\_\_\_\_ Hire Rate: \_\_\_\_\_ Current Rate: \_\_\_\_\_

Dress Code	1 2 3 4 5
Punctual	1 2 3 4 5
Dependable/Attendance	1 2 3 4 5
Cooperation with Others	1 2 3 4 5
Attitude	1 2 3 4 5
Organization	1 2 3 4 5
Need for Supervision	1 2 3 4 5
Flexibility	1 2 3 4 5
Follows Policies & Procedures	1 2 3 4 5

Appearance of Classroom	1 2 3 4 5
Preparation	1 2 3 4 5
Attention to class schedule	1 2 3 4 5
Maintain Training Hours	1 2 3 4 5
Interaction with Children	1 2 3 4 5
Interaction with Parents	1 2 3 4 5
Interaction with Staff	1 2 3 4 5
Discipline in the classroom	1 2 3 4 5
Implements curriculum	1 2 3 4 5

CPR (yes or no): \_\_\_\_\_  
 Food License Type: \_\_\_\_\_

Expiration date: \_\_\_\_\_  
 Expiration date: \_\_\_\_\_

Documented Training Hours \_\_\_\_\_ # Hours Needed: \_\_\_\_\_ Need by Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Evaluator's Comments:

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Employee signature: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Evaluator's signature: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

1-Needs Major Improvement    2-Needs Some Improvement    3- Meets Standards    4-Often Exceeds Standards    5-Consistently Exceeds
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