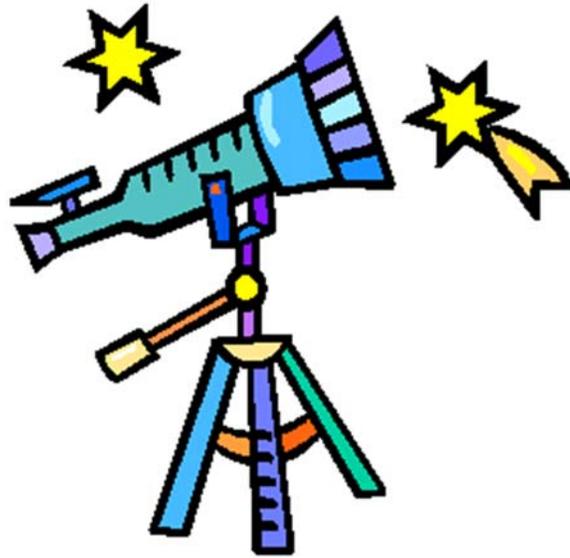


# DISCOVERY KIDS



## CHILD CARE CENTER

### Policy Information for Parents

For Infant, Toddler, Preschool and School Aged Care

Address:

Benson Public Schools  
1400 Montana Avenue  
Benson, MN 56215

Phone: (320) 842-2723

Fax: (320) 843-2262

[discoverykids@benson.k12.mn.us](mailto:discoverykids@benson.k12.mn.us)

## Table of Contents

### Program Information

Mission Statement and Philosophy .....	Page 3
Goals, Objectives and Activities.....	Page 3
Program Activities & Enrichment .....	Pages 3-4
License Capacity.....	Page 4
Location & Transportation.....	Page 4
Operational Schedule .....	Page 5
Registration.....	Page 5
Wait List .....	Page 5
Updating Enrollment Records .....	Page 6
Arrivals and Departures .....	Page 6
Clothing and Items to be Provided by Parents/Guardians.....	Page 6
Services for Children with Special Needs .....	Page 7
Staff Supervision .....	Page 7
Missing Children.....	Page 7
Unauthorized, Unsafe and Lake Pick Up.....	Page 7
Confidentiality.....	Page 8

### Fees, Payments and Absences

Current Pricing.....	Page 8
Contracting.....	Page 8-9
Fee Assessment.....	Page 9
Payment Process.....	Page 9
Custody Issues.....	Page 10
Financial Assistance.....	Page 10
Excused Absences .....	Page 10
Missing Preschool - School Children and Finder's Fees.....	Page 10-11

### Parent Communication and Involvement

Parent Communication .....	Page 11
Parent Conferences and Daily Reports .....	Page 11
Emergency Contact Information.....	Page 11
Child Care Program Plan Review.....	Page 11
Visitors.....	Page 12
Field Trips / Outings.....	Page 12
Playgrounds / Outdoor Play .....	Page 12
Pets .....	Page 12
Special Events .....	Page 12
Research and Observation .....	Page 12
Parent Grievance Policy .....	Page 13
Parent Code of Conduct.....	Page 13
Swearing / Cursing .....	Page 13
Threatening of Employees, Children or Other Parents of the Program.....	Page 13
Physical / Verbal Punishment of Your Child or Other Children .....	Page 13-14
Smoking.....	Page 14
Violations of the Confidentiality Policy.....	Page 14

## Meal / Food Policy

Meals .....	Page 14
Food Allergy Safety .....	Page 14
Foods from Home .....	Page 15
Special Feeding Needs.....	Page 15
Food Temperature.....	Page 15
Breastfeeding .....	Page 15
Infants/Toddlers.....	Page 15-16

## Toilet Training Policies and Procedures

Underwear / Training Policy.....	Page 16
Naptime Training.....	Page 16
What Children Should Wear During Training.....	Page 16
Prohibited Actions .....	Page 17
When a Child is Ready / Definitions of Potty Training.....	Page 17-18

## Behavior Guidance Policies and Procedures

Prevention .....	Page 18
Positive Redirection.....	Page 18
Persistent Unacceptable Behavior.....	Page 18-19
Separation from the Group.....	Page 19
Prohibited Actions by Staff.....	Page 19

## Health & Safety Policies

Notice of a Sick Child .....	Page 20
Contagious Disease Notification.....	Pages 20-21
Head Lice Policy.....	Page 21
Administration of Medicine .....	Page 21-22
Biting Policy .....	Page 22
First Aid / CPR.....	Page 22
Emergency.....	Page 22-23
Drills & Blizzards .....	Page 23

## Nap & Rest Policies

Confinement Limitations .....	Page 23
Placement of Equipment.....	Page 23
Bedding & Crib Standards.....	Page 24
Infant Sleep Procedures.....	Pages 24-25

## Maltreatment of Minors and Mandated Reporting

Who Should Report .....	Page 25
Where to Report .....	Page 25
What to Report .....	Page 25-26
Failure to Report.....	Page 26
Retaliation Prohibited.....	Page 26
Internal Review .....	Page 26
Staff Training .....	Pages 27

## Program Information

### Mission Statement

Discovery Kids is dedicated to providing child care in a positive environment to encourage healthy growth and development in children.

### Philosophy

The primary purpose is to:

- provide a structured, safe environment;
- provide a caring, supportive environment for children to learn and play;
- provide opportunities for healthy social and emotional development;
- encourage independence and self-worth; and
- offer a free-choice atmosphere of educational and recreational activities.

### Goals, Objectives and Activities

Weekly lessons plans will be developed and evaluated in writing annually by each teacher.

These plans will:

- include large group time, small group time, fine motor experiences, creativity, sensory, science, dramatic play, gross motor, music and outside / gym time play;
- promote the intellectual, physical, social and emotional progress of each child;
- specify activities designed to promote the development of a child in a manner consistent with the child's cultural background;
- be documented in the child's record and conveyed to the parent during conferences;
- include daily schedule for indoor and outdoor activities;
- provide for activities that are both quiet and active, teacher directed and child initiated;
- provide for a variety of activities that require the use of varied equipment and materials; and
- be available to parents for review on request.

### Program Activities

During the early years infants are learning to trust their world, actively explore their environment, and do things for themselves. Staff show respect for children and interact with them in caring ways. An infant lesson plan is developed each week for the classroom and individual activities are planned for every child. These activities center on daily routines: morning and evening transitions, diapering, feeding, eating, and napping. Staff also introduce infants to a variety of experiences; including art, outdoor/gym time (large motor), playing with toys, infant sign, looking at books (pre-reading), singing songs (musical), exploring water play (sensory), and more.

For toddlers, staff plan a variety of fun activities to help them solve, predict, plan, share, cooperate, empathize, and understand how to get along with their world. Again, the focus is on maximizing play and learning experiences in daily routines. In the weekly lesson plan, staff incorporate art (fine motor), outdoor/gym time (large motor), stories and reading, songs, sand and water play (sensory), food projects, creative movement, imitating, and pretending. Staff promote positive self-esteem and self-help skills.

For preschoolers, our goals are similar to those indicated for toddlers, although we focus more on pre-reading and pre-math skills. A few examples are sorting, patterning, color awareness, calendar activities, classification, estimating, number and letter recognition and naming, rhyming, picture naming, alliteration and letter sounds. In our weekly lesson plans we also include art (fine motor), outdoor/gym time (large motor), stories and reading, songs, sand and water play (sensory), food projects, creative movement, imitating, and pretending. Staff promote socialization skills by concentrating on manners, privacy rules, non-violent conflict resolution, empathizing, sharing, imagining, and communication skills.

For school-age children, our goal is to provide a safe environment where children learn and play. There is a time provided for snack, to complete homework, and for participation in activities throughout the classroom. Staff continue to provide socialization skills appropriate for the school-age child. Outside and gym time is utilized when weather permits and space is available.

### **Program Enrichment**

Discovery Kids utilizes Creative Curriculum, 1-2-3 Learn and Teaching Strategies Gold Assessments in the program. Teachers will hold conferences with families twice a year in the fall and spring, or as needed, to go over the growth and progress that their child has made while in the program. Conferences will include an evaluation of the child's intellectual, physical, social, and emotional development.

### **License Capacity**

	Ratio
16 Infants (6 weeks to 16 months)	1 adult per 4 children
28 Toddlers (16 months to 33 months)	1 adult per 7 children
20 Preschoolers (33 months to Kindergarten)	1 adult per 10 children
School-Age	1 adult per 12 children

Infant and Toddler licensing through the State of Minnesota DHS Licensing (651) 431-6500. Preschool and School-Age is license exempt through the Minnesota Department of Education.

### **Location**

Discovery Kids is located at 1400 Montana Avenue, Benson, MN 56215. The center is on 1<sup>st</sup> and 2<sup>nd</sup> floors of the Benson Elementary / Benson Junior High building. Phone number is 320-842-2723.

### **Transportation**

Transportation to and from Northside Elementary for preschool and school-aged children will be provided by Benson Public Schools. A staff member will drive, or will accompany, students on a school bus.

All students are to meet Discovery kids outside of the Northside office after school. Students should be dressed for the weather and have all materials in backpacks as there is not enough time to allow the students to walk back to classroom/locker to retrieve forgotten items. If your child is lagging behind and is not at our meeting location when it's time to load the bus, you will be charged a \$5.00 Finder's Fee. See Finder's Fee on page 10 for more information.

### Operational Schedule

- Discovery Kids is open five days per week, Monday through Friday.
- Hours of operation are 5:30 a.m. through 6:30 p.m.
- Discovery Kids is closed on the following holidays: New Year's Day, Good Friday, Memorial Day, 4th of July, Labor Day, Thanksgiving Day, the day after Thanksgiving, Christmas Eve and Christmas Day.

### Registration

Registration by a parent or guardian is required prior to attendance. Registration forms are available at Discovery Kids and Benson Community Education. Registration is available on a first-come, first-served basis. Discovery Kids follows strict ratio guidelines and once all classroom slots are filled, children will be placed on a waiting list and the parents will be notified as daily slots become available.

At the time of registration, parents will be given a packet with important forms that will need to be completed before your child is officially enrolled in Discovery Kids. Each child's file will contain a registration form, emergency card, health care summary, immunization statement and parent/guardian consent forms.

Within 30 days of admission, Discovery Kids must obtain a *Health Care Summary* signed by the child's source of medical care.

For children already admitted, an updated *Health Care Summary* signed by the child's source of medical care must be updated at least annually for children under 24 months of age and whenever a child 24 months of older advances to an older age category.

An Immunization Record must be submitted documenting current immunizations, a signed notarized statement of parental objection to the immunizations or a medical exemption.

### Wait List

A Wait List application, accompanied by a non-refundable \$20 waiting list fee, is the first step in applying for any of Discovery Kid's child slots. Applicants are placed on the wait list according to the date the waitlist application and fee is received. When openings occur, families are contacted according to the information supplied by the parents at the time of application, and offered the slot. Telephones not answered and messages not returned will cause us to go to the next name on the wait list.

As openings in the classrooms occur, enrollment of children is determined by the following criteria:

- Internal movement-moving a child from a younger group to an older group;
- Child of a staff member;
- Previously enrolled child returning from an approved leave of absence;
- Sibling of a currently enrolled child;
- Center waiting list.

### Updating Enrollment Records

Each fall, Discovery kids completes an audit of enrollment records. At the conclusion of this audit, families will be notified if anything needs to be updated. Some forms must be updated every year. Other records must be updated throughout the year, such as physicals and immunization records. When visiting your child's physician for a yearly "well-child" appointment, please request a copy of your child's physical and most recent immunization records. You may bring the records in yourself, or have your physician fax them to us at 320-843-2262.

### Arrivals and Departures

Parents and authorized adults must accompany children into and out of the center at all times, and must sign children in and out when coming and going.

- Parents are encouraged to keep routine arrival and departure schedules for optimum staffing.
- Parents will notify teachers when children will not be in attendance, dropped off late, or picked up early to ensure proper staffing.
- Children that receive special services and are transported by that third party will be signed out by the staff person responsible in walking the child to the bus/transportation vehicle. After the student arrives back at the center the staff person responsible in resuming care will sign the child back into care.

### Clothing and Items to be Provided by Parents/Guardians

Children often become so involved in activities at the center that they forget about the types of clothing they are wearing. To meet the children's needs to fully participate in the program and be successful in dressing themselves, parents should keep the following in mind when dressing their children for Discovery Kids:

- Be simple enough so the child can put in on and take it off easily.
- Be loose enough to provide freedom of movement.
- Be durable and washable enough to permit vigorous play.
- Be inexpensive so that soiling, damage, or loss will not cause great concern.
- Be appropriate to present weather conditions.
- ALL clothing should be labeled with the child's name.

All children need a complete change of clothing at the center. Infants, toddlers, and those being toilet trained should have 3 complete sets of clothing in their lockers/cubbies.

Disposable diapers and wipes for infants and toddlers must be provided and be labeled with the child's name. Diaper rash ointment is optional; if needed, please provide and label with the child's name.

For naptime, a blanket and soft toy.

Infant formula and baby food will be provided by Discovery Kids. If your child requires a formula not covered by our food service program, parents will need to supply the formula.

### *Services for Children with Special Needs*

Discovery Kids does provide services to children with special needs, granted the needs of the individual child can be met adequately. When a child with a diagnosed special need is admitted into the program, staff shall develop an Individual Child Care Plan to meet the child's individual needs. The plan shall be developed in a joint effort with the child's parents, school district personnel, and medical or health personnel involved in the child's diagnosis or treatment. The plan shall be coordinated with the child's individual education plan (IEP) as developed by the school district or medical personnel.

### *Staff Supervision*

All children will be under an adult's supervision at all times. No staff member may ever leave a group of children without supervision. Teacher/child ratios for each age group will be maintained at all times. Teachers are responsible for knowing how many children are in their care at all times and will position themselves in the classroom in order to view all the children at any time. The classrooms are arranged so that children can be readily observed in all areas. The classroom is checked daily for safety of materials and arrangements.

### *Missing Children*

If a child is missing Discovery Kids will follow the guidelines. The order in which they are completed is dependent on the age of the child and the situation.

1. Re-check attendance information including the parent notebook and sign-in/out.
2. Check with all classroom and office staff. If child accidentally got on the bus, contact the bus driver immediately to have them returned to the school.
3. Do an "all call" throughout the building and grounds if necessary.
4. If child cannot be accounted for, one staff person will be in charge of organizing a search while another contacts police, parents, and school.

### *Unauthorized Pick Up*

For each child's protection, the only people authorized to pick up a child are those designated by the parent/guardian on the contract. If someone else is picking up your child, you must inform Discovery Kids of this change in writing. This new person must provide a picture ID in order for the student to be released.

### *Unsafe Pick Up*

If a staff person determines that a child could be in danger if allowed to leave with someone who is not in a position to adequately supervise and care for that child the staff person will call an emergency contact to pick up the child. If the person insists on taking the child against the recommendation of staff, we will call 911 for police assistance to do what is necessary to protect the child from any perceived threat of danger. This includes anyone who is mentally incapable, incapacitated or is suspected of abuse.

### *Late Pick Up*

If a child is not picked up by closing time, parents will be contacted immediately. If there is no response, staff will call the emergency contacts listed. If there is still no response, staff will call the police for further assistance. A late charge will be assessed for all late pick-ups: \$5.00 for 6:30-6:40 p.m.; then \$5.00 for every 5 minutes after 6:40 p.m.

## Confidentiality

All staff are required to keep all knowledge about the children confidential. All confidential materials will remain in a lockable filing cabinet. Children will never be discussed in the presence of other families or children. No information can be shared with an outside agency without the written consent from the legal guardian. Parents are also expected to maintain confidentiality of identity when talking about their child's activities at Discovery Kids.

## Fees, Payments and Absences

### Current Pricing (2017-2018 School Year)

#### **Young Infants** (6 weeks – 11 months)

Contracted: \$33.00 a day; must contract a minimum of 4 days a week

Drop-In: \$36.00 a day; available only if a spot is available

#### **Older Infants** (12 months – 16 months)

Contracted: \$32.00 a day; must contract a minimum of 4 days a week

Drop-In: \$35.00 a day; available only if a spot is available

#### **Toddlers** (16 months – 33 months)

Contracted: \$31.00 a day; must contract a minimum of 4 days a week

Drop-In: \$34.00 a day; available only if a spot is available

#### **Preschool** (33 months – school aged)

Contracted: \$29.00 a day

Drop-In: \$32.00 a day; available only if a spot is available

Preschool rates (see below)

#### **School Age** (kindergarten-6<sup>th</sup> grade)

Before and after School: \$6.00 a day

Non-School and Summer: \$25.00 a day

Drop-In: \$27.00 a day

#### Preschool Options

- a. AM / PM School Readiness and Head Start students will be charged \$15.00 on the days they have school and \$29.00 on non-school days.
- b. Full Day School Readiness/Preschool students will be charged \$6 before and after school and \$29 on non-school days

## Contracting

### How to Contract:

- When registering, please choose the specific days of the week that you want to reserve for your child.
- You are then charged for those days until you withdraw from the contract.

### Contract Changes:

- If you need to make changes to your contract, ask the Director for an Amended Contract. Please use this option conservatively. Parents are allowed 2 contract changes in a year. After that, there will be a \$5 charge to adjust the contract. More than four

changes to the contract may be considered abusive, and your contract may be changed to drop-in.

- Changes to the contract require a two-week written notice.

#### Withdrawal/Enrollment Termination

- Parents may withdraw a child from Discovery Kids at any time. To withdraw, you must let the office know, in writing, at least 2 weeks prior to the effective change date.
- Parents who fail to provide the notice may be liable for the equivalent of two week's tuition or fees.
- All outstanding balances must be paid in full.
- If you withdraw from Discovery Kids you will need to submit a new contract to re-enroll and will entail an additional \$20.00 registration fee.

#### Drop In Child Care

- Children may attend on a drop-in only basis, or you may add drop-in care in addition to your contracted days.
- You must call 24 hours in advance to ensure space is available for you to drop in.
- Drop-In availability is completely dependent on classroom enrollment and ratio guidelines

#### Fee Assessment

At the time of enrollment or at the beginning of each school year, parents shall be asked to identify their child's weekly attendance schedule by contracting for specific days. Fees will be assessed each week coinciding with your selected contracting option.

Additional charges (past due, late pick up, finder's fee, etc.) will be assessed at the end of each week. Families will be charged according to their contract regardless of whether or how long the child is in attendance.

#### Payment Process

Parents will be billed every week. Bills need to be paid within 4 days of receiving the emailed invoice. Paper copies will also be available, upon request, and placed in the family folder. A bill that is past due will be charged a \$10 late fee.

Payment options include:

- online payment with a credit card (a 3.5% fee will be charge by the company)
- paying by check, payable to BPS, can be left in the Discovery Kids payment box located in the office or mailed to Benson Community Education. Returned checks will be charged a state allowed recovery fee.
- paying with cash which must be sealed in an envelope with child's name on the front. Parent must get a receipt from a staff member for the cash.

If your account balance is two weeks past due, services will be suspended until the account is current. You will continue to be charged according to your contract during this suspension. If service is suspended for more than one week without payment, your child care slot will be opened up and made available to families on the waiting list. Re-enrollment will then be required and will be dependent on space availability.

### **Custody Issues**

Staff will not be involved in custody disputes between parents. We will be unable to separate children's accounts. It is the parent's responsibility to work out the scheduling and payments for child care. The person who signs the Discovery Kids contract is responsible for making payments associated with the account.

### **Financial Assistance**

Financial assistance is available to income-eligible families. Swift County Human Services has Daycare Assistance. It is the family's responsibility to contact SCHS to request funds. Funding is also available through the Minnesota Department of Education's Early Learning Scholarship Program (Childcare Aware Pathways money). An enrollment form for the MDE is available at Discovery Kids.

### **Excused Absences**

Each child is allotted three weeks of vacation/illness/personal time off, without charge during the contracting year (September-August). A "week" correlates to the number of days per week that the child is contracted. For example, if a child is contracted 4 days per week, the family is allotted 12 days throughout the contracting year without charge. If a child is contracted 5 days per week the family is allotted 15 days without charge.

The absence days accrue at the following rate:

- one week of days for the months of September – December (1st trimester)
- one week for the months of January – April (2nd trimester), and
- one week for the months of May – August (3rd trimester)

Unused absence days will carry-over from one trimester to the next, but will start over at the beginning of every school year. Absences are not transferrable from one child to another. In order to use an absence the child must be absent from the program for an entire day and the classroom must be notified of the absence before 7 am so that families inquiring about drop-in care can be notified.

### **Absence Notification**

Parents must notify Discovery Kids by 7:00 am or earlier if their child will be absent. A message may be left on the Discovery Kids voice mailbox. This information is used when planning daily staff schedules, transportation and food service, and allows the staff to be informed of your child's whereabouts. Non-notification will result in charging of their contracted hours.

### **Missing Preschool – School Children and Associated Finder's Fee**

When a registered pre-school and school-aged child does not come to the Discovery Kids meeting location (by the Northside Elementary Office), the staff member will follow these steps to determine the child's whereabouts:

1. Check with the office to determine the child's presence in school that day.
2. Talk to the child's teacher (if possible) to determine the last time the child was seen, or of any schedule changes he/she is aware of.
3. Call the parent's cell phone to verify any schedule changes.

A dated, written note explaining the steps followed will be placed in the child's file with a copy placed in the family folder.

Discovery Kids is expecting the child and is not staffed to search the school facilities for them. Please remember that this policy is for the safety of your child. If we must spend time searching for a child because the parent has neglected to inform us of an absence, the parent will be charged a \$5.00 finder's fee in addition to their contracted hours.

### **Parent Communication and Involvement**

#### **Parent Communication**

Parents are welcome at Discovery Kids at any time. They are encouraged to come in and visit or observe as their schedule allows – advance notice is not always necessary. Volunteer help is always welcome also. Staff shall occasionally ask parents to help with special projects and field trips.

Discovery Kids staff can do a better job of caring for children if they work together with and communicate with parents on a frequent basis. We encourage parents to talk with staff about their child on a daily basis.

Staff shall continually monitor each child's intellectual, physical, social and emotional development. Status reports are maintained for each child and are conveyed to parents during annual parent/teacher conferences.

#### **Parent Conferences and Daily Reports**

Discovery Kids will ensure that the parent of a child is informed of the child's progress through:

- individual parent conferences with a written assessment reflecting on the child's intellectual, physical, social and emotional development which is planned and offered at least twice a year;
- documentation in the child's record that individual parent conferences were planned and offered; and
- daily written reports to the parents of infants and toddlers about the child's food intake, elimination, sleeping patterns and general behavior.

#### **Emergency Contact Information**

For safety reasons it is imperative that parents provide current information on their child's forms. Should any changes occur throughout the school year parents are expected to inform Discovery Kids immediately.

#### **Child Care Program Plan Review**

The Child Care Program Plan is developed and evaluated in writing annually by the Community Education Director, Discovery Kids Director and a Discovery Kids teacher and is available for parental review at any time. If you wish to review this document, please contact the Director.

### Visitors

Parents are welcome to visit the program any time during our hours of operation. All doors to the school will be locked from 8:05 a.m. to 3:00 p.m. Access to the center is available through a doorbell located on the door of the main entrance to Discovery Kids. Staff must open the doors to allow entrance between the hours of 8:05 a.m. and 3:00 p.m. All visitors are required to sign in to the Discovery Kids office before being permitted to enter the facility. Staff is trained to speak to all visitors that enter the center and assist them in finding the appropriate information.

### Field Trips/Outings

Written permission for field trips will be received prior to the event. Infants and toddlers will not attend field trips unless they are confined (i.e. a stroller) and only be in the community if it is within walking distance.

Children will be under direct supervision at all times. Specific children are assigned to specific staff on all field trips following a low staff/child ratio. Children are tracked regularly on outings using a "name to face count".

Field trips are not optional as we do not staff for children to stay back, and all children who are in attendance are required to attend field trips. If a parent does not wish for their child to attend a field trip they would need to find alternate care for that time.

### Playground/Outdoor Play

Daily outdoor play is scheduled for all children. Discovery Kids does not go outside when ambient air temperatures are 0° or colder. Parents should ensure their child has clothing suited to the weather. This includes hat, mittens, coat, snow pants, boots, etc.

Discovery Kids also monitors the Heat Index. When it is determined that the heat is excessive for young children, all children will remain their classroom for the remainder of the day.

### Pets

Pets will be only allowed at Discovery Kids with 1 week prior approval by the Director. Parents will be notified by a note home with the details.

### Special Events

If you would like to celebrate your child's birthday with a special snack, please discuss it with a staff person in your child's room ahead of time. Our licensing requires us to only serve pre-packaged, store-bought food. You may also purchase/order from the Benson Public Schools Food Service program.

### Research and Observation

In the event of possible research, observation, or experimental procedure involving a child in the program, all parents would be required to give written permission for the child to participate. At the time that parents sign the contract they have the option to give, or deny, permission for health and behavior information about their child to be shared with Discovery Kids for the purpose safety and in order to provide a positive care experience for their child.

### **Parent Grievance Policy**

If a parent/guardian has a grievance with a staff member or policy, s/he should talk to the staff member and try to resolve any issues. If there is no resolution, the parent/guardian should bring his/her concern to the Director.

If a parent/guardian has a grievance with the Director, s/he should talk to the Director and try to resolve any issue. If there is no resolution, the parent/guardian should bring his/her concern to the Community Education Director.

### **Parent Code of Conduct**

Discovery Kids requires the parents of enrolled children at all times, to behave in a manner consistent with decency, courtesy, and respect. One of the goals of Discovery Kids is to provide the most appropriate environment in which a child can grow, learn and develop. Achieving this ideal environment is not only the responsibility of our employees but, is the responsibility of each and every parent or adult who enters the building. Parents are required to behave in a manner that fosters this ideal environment. Parents who violate the Parent Code of Conduct will not be permitted on center property thereafter.

### **Swearing/Cursing**

No parent or adult is permitted to curse or use other inappropriate language on program property at any time, whether in the presence of a child or not. Such language is considered offensive by many people and will not be tolerated. If a parent or adult feels frustrated or angry, it is more appropriate to verbally express the frustration or anger using non-offensive language. At NO time shall inappropriate language be directed toward members of the staff.

### **Threatening of Employees, Children, or Other Parents of the Program**

Threats of any kind will not be tolerated. In addition, all threats will be reported to the appropriate authorities and will be prosecuted to the fullest extent of the law. While apologies for such behavior are appreciated, the program will not assume the risk of a second chance. Parents must be responsible for and in control of their behavior at all times.

### **Physical/Verbal Punishment of Your Child or Other Children**

While Discovery Kids does not support nor condone corporal punishment of children, such acts are not permitted in or on program property. While verbal reprimands may be appropriate it is not appropriate for parents to verbally abuse their child. Doing so may cause undue embarrassment or emotional distress. Parents are always welcome to discuss a behavior issue with the teacher and to seek advice and guidance regarding appropriate and effective disciplinary procedures.

Parents are prohibited from addressing, for the purpose of correction or discipline, a child that is not their own. Of course, no parent or other adult may physically punish another parent's child. If a parent should witness another parent's child behaving in an inappropriate manner, or is concerned about behavior reported to them by their own child, it is most appropriate for the parent to direct their concern to the classroom teacher and/or program director.

Furthermore, it is wholly inappropriate for one parent to seek out another parent to discuss their child's inappropriate behavior. All behavior concerns should be brought to the classroom teacher or director's attention. At that point, the teacher and/or director will address the issue with the other parent. Although you may be curious as to the outcome of such a discussion, teachers and/or the director are strictly prohibited from discussing anything about another child with you. All children enrolled in our program have privacy rights and are further protected by our Confidentiality Policy. You may be assured that we will not discuss anything about your child with another parent or adult visiting the center.

### **Smoking**

For the health of all Discovery Kids employees, children, and associates, smoking is prohibited anywhere on district property. Parents are prohibited from smoking in the building, on the grounds, and in the parking lot of Benson Public Schools. Parents who are smoking in their cars must dispose of the cigarette prior to entering the parking lot.

### **Violations of the Confidentiality Policy**

Discovery Kids takes very seriously the responsibility of maintaining the confidentiality of all persons associated with the program. Parents must understand the implications of this responsibility. Parents need to recognize that the Confidentiality Policy not only applies to their child or family, but all children, families and employees associated with Discovery Kids. Any parent who shares any information considered to be confidential, pressures employees or other parents for information which is not necessary for them to know, will be considered to be in violation of the Confidentiality Policy.

## **Meal/Food Policy**

### **Meals**

Discovery Kids will provide one meal and two snacks for a child who is in attendance at the time of serving. All meal and snacks will be provided by the Benson Public Schools Food Service program. Families are encouraged to complete a Free and Reduced Application upon enrollment.

All menus must comply with the nutritional requirements of the USDA, providing one-third of the child's daily nutritional needs. Menus will be given to each family monthly. Cold (bagged) lunches sent from home are accepted as long as the meal provides one-third of the child's daily nutritional needs as required by the USDA.

### **Food Allergy Safety**

We employ a number of methods to protect children with food allergies from contact with the problem food. We work to have an alternative food provided for that child.

### **Foods from Home**

Our standard operational procedures prohibit foods brought into the center from homes with the following exceptions:

- Parents bring in breast milk, either fresh or frozen, for their babies to drink. Bottles are labeled with the baby's first and last name and date the breastmilk was collected or thawed.
- Parents bring in food to celebrate a child's birthday or special occasion that is store packaged and un-opened.
- Cold lunch from home, must provide one-third of the child's daily nutritional needs as required by the USDA.

### **Special Feeding Needs**

Discovery Kids enrolls children with special needs whenever feasible for the child and the center. If a child currently enrolled develops signs of special needs, center staff continues to work with families sharing resources and support. When children have special feeding needs program staff keeps a daily record documenting the type and quantity of food a child consumed that day and shares that information with parents.

### **Food Temperature**

Liquids and foods that are hotter than 110° are kept out of children's reach. If needed, infant staff members will use a hot water bath to warm bottles. These bottles are monitored so the temperature of the tap water is not higher than 110°. We check food temperatures when food arrives from the kitchen to ensure a hot food temp of 140° or higher.

Food temperature notices are posted in the food preparation areas of the center

### **Breastfeeding**

Discovery Kids supports breastfeeding by:

- accepting, storing, and serving expressed breast milk for feedings;
- accepting breast milk in ready-to-feed sanitary containers labeled with the infant's name and date and storing it in a refrigerator for no longer than 48 hours (or no more than 24 hours if the breast milk was previously frozen) or in a freezer at 0° F or below for no longer than three months;
- ensuring that staff gently mix, not shake, the milk before feeding to preserve special infection-fighting and nutritional components in human milk; and
- providing a comfortable place for breastfeeding and coordinating feedings with the infant's mother.

### **Infants/Toddlers**

- Discovery Kids does not offer solid foods and fruit juices to infants younger than six months of age, unless that practice is recommended by the child's health care provider and approved by families. Sweetened beverages are avoided. If juice is served, the amount is limited to no more than four ounces per child daily.
- Infants unable to sit are held for bottle-feeding. All others sit or are held to be fed. Infants and toddlers do not have bottles while in a crib or bed and do not eat from

propped bottles at any time. Toddlers do not carry bottles, sippy cups, or regular cups with them while crawling or walking. Staff offer children fluids from a cup as soon as the families and teachers decide that a child is developmentally ready to use a cup.

- Discovery kids staff work with families (who are informed by their child's health care provider) to ensure that the food is based on the infants' individual nutritional needs and developmental stage.
- Except for breast milk, staff serve only formula and infant food that comes to the facility in factory sealed containers (e.g., ready-to-feed powder or concentrate formulas and baby food jars) prepared according to the manufacturer's instructions. Bottle feedings do not contain solid foods unless the child's health care provider supplies written instructions and a medical reason for this practice. Staff discard after one hour any formula or breast milk that is served but not completely consumed or is not refrigerated. If staff warm formula or breast milk, the milk is warmed in a bottle warmer. No milk, including breast milk, and no other infant foods are warmed in a microwave oven.
- We feed whole or reduced fat cow's milk to children ages 12-24 months. We do not feed cow's milk to children younger than 12 months. A request to differ from the latter policy would require a Special Dietary Statement from the child's health care provider.

## *Toilet Training Policies and Procedures*

### *Underwear/Training Policy*

At Discovery Kids we will not put children into underwear until they have been completely accident free in our program for two full weeks.

### *Naptime Training*

Discovery Kids requires diapers/pull-ups for rest time until the child has slept through rest time for one full month without an accident. Sometimes children "nap-train" right away when they are "awake time" trained. Most children are not able to do this and it may be many months or sometimes years before they are nap-trained.

### *What Children Should Wear During Training*

Children should wear easy on and off pants during training. We prefer sweat pant like bottoms until they are physically capable of doing snaps and buttons on their own. Please don't send them in anything that requires us to remove the top to get to the bottom. We do not allow overalls, union suits, one-piece jammies, or shirts with snaps at the crotch. Belts and suspenders are never allowed in the program for safety reasons.

Diapers and pull-ups are okay for training. We do not use pull-ups until the child is at the one week mark without accidents. We do not allow cloth diapers or underwear with plastic pants. If you have had great success at home we can do the training with the underwear and a pull-up over the underwear during the training. If the child has regular accidents in the underwear staff members will switch them back to regular diapers and try again at another time.

### **Prohibited Actions**

Discovery Kids will not put children on a “potty schedule” where they go every half hour or hour. This is very time consuming with little to no benefit. This makes children unable to go on our walks because they are not capable of lasting very long without having to come back to use the potty. This would result in our entire day centering around the potty which isn’t realistic in our setting nor is it the goal of our early education program.

We do not limit food or drinks to only be given at certain times, nor will we limit the amount of food or beverage below the state meal pattern requirements. We will maintain the same food and snack schedule during training. We will never withhold water from a child who is thirsty.

We do not clean out poopy underwear. We will bag urine soaked underwear and return it to the parent at the end of the day but we will not do this with soiled underwear. We must dispose of that immediately into the garbage. We don’t do laundry of any soaked or soiled clothes. They are bagged, placed in the child’s locker, and returned to the parents at pick-up time.

### **When a Child is ready to Potty Train**

Discovery Kids staff will:

1. start reading potty books and talking about going potty in the big girl or big boy potty during changing.
2. have them sit on the potty during our natural transition times (before and after meals, before and after naps, and diaper changes)
3. practice with them getting their pants up and down on their own and hand washing.
4. supervise them and watch for signs that they have to go or are going and get them off to the potty.
5. keep close communication with the parents about any indicators suggesting the child is ready.

### **Definition of a “Potty Trained” Child**

A potty trained child is a child who can do the following:

1. Be able to TELL the adult they have to go potty BEFORE they have to go. They must be able to say the words “I have to go potty” BEFORE they have to go.
2. Be able to pull down their underwear and pants and get them back up without assistance.
3. Be able to wipe themselves after using the toilet.
4. Be able to get off the potty by themselves.
5. Be able to wash and dry hands.
6. Be able to go directly back to the room without directions.
7. Be able to postpone going if they must wait for someone who is in the bathroom or if we are outside and away from the house.

Children who are ready to train have the ability to perceive events that are going to happen before they happen. Because we cannot allow children to go in and out of the room to freely

use the potty they MUST learn they have to tell us so that we can accompany them into the room and supervise them.

At Discovery Kids we are prohibited by state regulations to allow children to go to the bathroom unaccompanied. As a result, children need to learn that they must tell an adult they have to go BEFORE they have to go. We do not accept signs that the child has to go or nonverbal behavior. Children must be able to say the words "I have to go potty".

### **Behavior Guidance Policies and Procedures**

Discovery Kids staff guide children's behavior by providing a positive model of acceptable behavior. Children are taught to use positive and constructive communication to resolve conflict.

- Each child is provided with a positive model of acceptable behavior.
- Behavior guidance will be tailored to the developmental level of the child.
- Children are redirected away from problems toward constructive activity in order to reduce conflict.
- Children are taught how to use acceptable alternatives to problem behavior in order to reduce conflict.
- The safety of children and staff persons will be protected.
- Immediate and directly related consequences will be provided for a child's unacceptable behavior.

### **Prevention**

Every effort will be made to make reasonable adjustments to the program to accommodate the needs of each child. Adjustments may be made in the areas of environment, activities, and the grouping of children. It may also be appropriate to evaluate whether or not the program is a proper fit for the individual child.

### **Positive Redirection**

Staff will help the child identify acceptable alternatives to unacceptable behavior and help the child understand the impact of his/her behavior on self and others. Having multiple play and learning areas is key to the success of the children at Discovery Kids.

### **Persistent Unacceptable Behavior**

1. Staff will observe and record the behavior of the child and the staff's response to the behavior in the behavior log.
2. Develop a plan to address the behavior documented in the behavior log in consultation with the child's parent and staff when appropriate.

If a child exhibits severe behavior, the behavior will be recorded in the behavior log. Three instances of severe behavior will require a conference with the family, and other professionals when appropriate, to develop a plan to address and change the behavior. Four or more instances of severe behaviors may be grounds for dismissal from Discovery Kids.

Discovery Kids is not designed to provide long term 1:1 assistance for children. If a child receives personal care support outside of the classroom, has an identified special need, or has a behavior plan developed; it is the parents' responsibility to identify their child's needs on the appropriate forms at the time of enrollment. An individual conference to determine if Discovery Kids can meet the needs of the student may be necessary before enrollment is considered.

### **Separation from the Group**

1. No child may be separated from the group unless the teacher has tried less intrusive methods of guiding the child's behavior which have been ineffective and the child's behavior threatens the well-being of the child or other children in the center.
2. A child who required separation from the group will remain within an unenclosed part of the classroom where the child can be continuously seen and heard by a program staff person.
3. The child's return to the group is contingent on the child's stopping or bringing under control the behavior that precipitated the separation.
4. The child will return to the group as soon as the behavior that precipitated the separation abates or stops.
5. A child between the ages of six weeks and 16 months must not be separated from the group as a means of behavior guidance.

### **Separation Report**

1. All separations from the group will be notified on a daily log.
2. The log will contain notations of child's name, staff person's name, time, date and information indicating what less intrusive methods were used to guide the child's behavior and how the child's behavior continued to threaten the well-being of the child or other children in care.
3. If a child is separated from the group three times or more in one day, the parents will be notified and the parent's notification shall be indicated on the daily log.
4. If a child is separated from the group five times or more in one week or 8 times or more in 2 weeks, a plan will be developed to address the behavior documented in consultation with the child's parent and staff.

### **Prohibited Actions by Staff**

1. inflicting physical pain (i.e. rough handling, shoving, hair pulling, ear pulling, shaking, slapping, kicking, biting, pinching, hitting, spanking, etc.)
2. subjection to emotional abuse (i.e. name-calling, ostracism, shaming, shouting, threatening, ridiculing, or using language that threatens, humiliates, or frightens the child, etc.)
3. separation from a group
4. punishment for lapses in toilet habits
5. withholding food, light, warmth, clothing or medical care as punishment
6. the use of physical restraint, other than to physically hold a child when containment is necessary to protect a child or others from harm
7. the use of mechanical restraints, such as tying
8. making derogatory remarks about a child or the child's family

## *Health & Safety Policies*

### *Notice of a Sick Child*

If a child becomes sick at Discovery Kids, parents will be called immediately. For the protection of all children, we cannot accept or keep a child who is displaying any of the following conditions:

1. a contagious illness or condition that has not had sufficient treatment to reduce the health risk to others.
2. chicken pox until the lesions are crusted over and the child is no longer infectious.
3. has vomited two or more times in the previous 24 hours.
4. has had three or more abnormally loose bowel movements within the previous 24 hours.
5. has contagious conjunctivitis (pink eye) or pus draining from the eye.
6. has a bacterial or strep infection or impetigo and has not completed 24 hours of antimicrobial therapy.
7. is unusually tired or has unexplained lethargy.
8. has lice, ringworm, or scabies that is untreated.
9. has a 99.9°F fever or higher temperature of undiagnosed origin before fever reducing medication is given or when accompanied by behavior changes or other indications of illness.
10. has an undiagnosed rash or a rash that may be attributable to a contagious illness or condition.
11. has significant respiratory distress, uncontrolled coughing, wheezing, or difficulty breathing.
12. is not able to participate in program activities with reasonable comfort or displays persistent irritability or crying.
13. requires more care than staff can provide without compromising the health and safety of other children in care.

If a child becomes ill while at the center, the child will be placed on a cot in an area that is isolated from the other children in care but still within view and hearing distance of a staff person at all times. The parent will be called and asked to pick up the child as soon as possible. A sick child will be supervised until s/he is picked up.

A child must be free of fever or diarrhea for 24 hours before returning to the center and can no longer be in the contagious stage of a communicable disease. A doctor's note is required for a child to return in cases of undiagnosed rashes, skin lesions, running eyes, and other potentially communicable diseases. In the case of Head Lice, the hair must be medicinally shampooed and all nits must be removed from the hair before the child may return to the center.

### *Contagious Disease Notification*

If a child is diagnosed as having a contagious disease or condition, the parent/guardian is required to inform the center of the diagnosis within 24 hours of diagnosis so that a notice of possible exposure to illness or contagious condition can be posted to alert other parents.

Conditions to be reported include: ringworm, scabies, pink eye, impetigo, lice, measles, chickenpox, strep infections, etc.

Discovery Kids will notify Countryside Public Health if notified of any suspected case of reportable disease within 24 hours of receiving the parent's report.

### **Head Lice Policy**

Children found to have live lice in their hair will be sent home and parents will be required to shampoo their hair with an appropriate lice killing shampoo product and remove all nit eggs before readmission to Discovery Kids. Parents must also repeat the treatment at day 7.

Once head lice has been diagnosed or discovered on your child or a child in the room, it is important to respond quickly so that the spread of lice to others can be prevented.

#### **Procedure:**

1. Staff will check for evidence of live lice and/or nit eggs when children have observable problems with their hair (i.e. itching, scaling, dry scalp, dandruff, etc.).
2. Lice checks will occur individually in another room. Each lice check will be recorded, noting the date, time, students and results of the checks.
3. If live lice and/or viable nit eggs are found, the child's parent will be contacted and the child will be sent home for treatments.
4. All students returning to Discovery Kids from treatment at home will be checked by staff. Hair will be checked on day 7, 14, 21 and 28 to prevent reinfestation. Parents are required to repeat the lice killing treatment at day 7.
5. A classroom check will be initiated whenever lice are found on one of the children in that room.

### **Administration of Medicine**

If the parent requests that staff administer medication or preventive treatment (diapering products, sunscreen, insect repellent, etc.) to a child while s/he is at Discovery Kids, the parent or guardian must:

1. fill out and sign a Medication Authorization Form.
2. provide written instructions from a licensed physician or dentist for the administration of each prescription medication.

All medicine must be kept in its original container and have a legible label stating the child's name. The medicine must be given only to the child whose name is on the label. The medicine must not be given after an expiration date on the label, and any unused portion must be returned to the child's parent or destroyed. Discovery Kids must ensure that the administration of medicine is recorded with the name of the child, name of medication, date, time, dosage and the name and signature of the person who dispensed the medicine. This record is available to the parent and maintained in the child's record.

Non-prescription medicine such as sunscreens and insect repellents supplied by Discovery Kids may be used on more than one child. A product to control or prevent diaper rash, including pre-moistened commercial wipes that cannot be dispensed in a manner that prevents cross contamination of the product and container as determined by Public Health,

must be labeled with the child's name and used only for the individual whose name is written on the label.

Medicines, insect repellents, sunscreen and diaper rash control products must be stored according to direction on the original container and so they are inaccessible to children.

### **Biting Policy**

Biting is a behavior that usually appears between the ages of one and three years. While biting is an age-appropriate behavior, it is important to remember it is also an unacceptable behavior in a childcare environment. Children bite for a variety of reasons: teething, sensory exploration, cause and effect, imitation, crowding, seeking attention, frustration and stress. Biting is not something to blame on children, their parents or their teachers. There are a variety of strategies we implement at Discovery Kids to prevent and stop biting. This is the process followed when a child bites:

- The biting child is stopped and told, "Stop biting. Biting hurts" in a firm voice. Teachers should remain calm, being careful not to show anger or frustration towards the child.
- The biting child is removed from the situation. Depending upon the observed motive for the bite, the separation may include re-direction or meeting the child's needs. As little attention as possible will be placed on the biting child, to avoid reinforcing the behavior.
- Appropriate first aid will be provided to the child who was bitten. Bite will be washed with soap

All information is confidential and names of the children involved in the incident are not shared between parents. In addition, biting is always documented on an Incident/Accident Report which is completed and signed by a teacher and parent. A copy is provided to the parent and the original kept in the child's permanent enrollment file in the office.

### **First Aid/CPR Policies and Procedures**

Staff are required, while employed at Discovery Kids, to maintain current certifications in Infant and Child CPR, First-Aid and AED. At least one certified staff member is always present with each group of children.

Discovery Kids will ensure that a first aid kit is available within the center. The kit must contain sterile bandages, band-aids, sterile compresses, scissors, cold pack, an oral or surface thermometer and adhesive tape. A current first aid manual will be included. The first aid kit and manual must be accessible to the staff in the center and taken on field trips.

Instructions for carrying out emergency, accident and injury policies will be made available to all staff members at the time of hire and in their employee handbook, and will also be given to the parents at the time of enrollment as a part of their parent handbook. Detailed instructions for specific instances/emergencies will be available in all classrooms.

### **Emergency Policy**

In the event of an emergency, serious injury, or illness requiring medical attention at the center, the staff will contact the parents/guardians. If staff cannot reach the

parents/guardians, they will call the person(s) listed on the child's emergency card. If emergency contacts are unavailable, staff will call 911 for further assistance. In cases of life-threatening emergencies, Discovery Kids staff will immediately call 911. The doctor and dentist information listed in your registration packet may also be utilized if necessary.

### **Drill Policy**

**Fire Drills:** Fire drills will be held monthly and recorded with the time and date. Staff and children will utilize the evacuation routes that are posted in each classroom.

**Tornado Drills:** Tornado drills will be held during the months of April through September. Staff and children will follow the evacuation routes that are posted in each classroom.

**Evacuation Drill:** An Evacuation drill will be held annually with the Benson Public School district. Staff and children will follow the evacuation routes that are posted in each classroom.

### **Blizzards**

If a blizzard should set in during the day, children will be kept at Discovery Kids until they can be safely picked up by a parent or authorized adult. We will monitor weather conditions and contact and encourage families to pick their child up as soon as possible, for the safety of the child, family and center staff.

## **Nap & Rest Policy**

Naptime is a scheduled part of the daily schedule for toddlers and preschoolers and is required by DHS licensing guidelines for child care centers. All preschoolers and toddlers are required to lie on a cot to rest or sleep for at least thirty minutes.

The environment is darkened, and restful music is played. Staff will not awake children before they are ready to wake up on their own. Staff will raise the blinds and turn on the lights mid-afternoon. Infants are each provided with a crib and sleep according to their individual schedules.

### **Confinement Limitations**

A child who has completed a nap or rested quietly for 30 minutes, must not be required to remain on a cot or in a crib.

### **Placement of Equipment**

Naps and rest must be provided in a quiet area that is physically separated from children who are engaged in an activity that will disrupt a napping or resting child. Cribs, cots and mats must be placed so there are clear aisles and unimpeded access for both adults and children on at least one side of each piece of napping and resting equipment. Cribs, cots and mats must be placed directly on the floor and must not be stacked when in use.

### **Bedding**

Separate bedding must be provided for each child in care. Bedding must be washed weekly and when soiled or wet. Blankets must be washed weekly and when soiled or wet.

### **Crib Standards**

A crib will be provided for each infant for which Discovery Kids is licensed to provide care. The equipment will be of safe and sturdy construction that conforms to the Code of Federal Regulations. Cribs will be inspected monthly to ensure safety standards. Cribs are also checked annually to be sure they have not been recalled.

Crib wheels are locked in order to prevent accidental movement. Discovery Kids has 4 specifically designed evacuation cribs (max. 4 infants per crib). Evacuation cribs have: wheels (preferably 4 inches or larger) capable of crossing terrain on evacuation route and a reinforced bottom. A clear pathway is kept between evacuation cribs and emergency exits at all times. Nothing is stored below or around evacuation cribs that would block immediate exit of cribs.

Discovery Kids will maintain documentation for every crib used or is accessible to any child in care that contains the crib's brand name and model number. No crib will be used if it does not have documentation.

### **Infant Sleep Procedures**

1. Each infant is allowed to follow his/her individual sleep pattern. Infant providers look for and respond to cues as to when an infant is sleepy.
2. Infants are visible to providers at all times while asleep. Rooms are kept light enough to allow easy observation of sleeping infants.
3. Infants are placed to sleep on their backs in a crib. (Infants sleeping on their stomachs are at a higher risk of death from S.I.D.S. - Sudden Infant Death Syndrome.)
4. Any alternate sleep position must be specified in writing by the parent/guardian and the child's health care provider on the appropriate forms. The physician directive must be on a form approved by the commissioner and must remain on file at the center. An infant who independently rolls onto its stomach after being placed to sleep on its back may be allowed to remain sleeping on its stomach if the infant is at least six months of age or the center has a signed statement from the parent indicating that the infant regularly rolls over at home.
5. Discovery Kids must place the infant in a crib directly on a firm mattress with a fitted sheet that is appropriate to the mattress size, fits tightly on the mattress, and overlaps the underside of the mattress so it cannot be dislodged by pulling on the corner of the sheet with reasonable effort.
6. Discovery Kids must not place anything in the crib with an infant 12 months and younger except for the infant's pacifier.
7. If an infant falls asleep before being placed in a crib Discovery Kids must move the infant to a crib as soon as practicable. The infant must be kept within sight of a staff member until the infant is placed in a crib. When an infant falls asleep while being

held, Discovery Kids must consider the supervision needs of other children in care when determining how long to hold the infant before placing him/her in the crib to sleep. The sleeping infant must not be in a position where the airway may be blocked or with anything covering the infant's face.

8. Placing a swaddled infant down to sleep is not recommended for an infant of any age and is prohibited for any infant who has begun to roll over independently. The only exception is with a written consent of a parent or guardian, a staff member may place the infant who has not yet begun to roll over on its own down to sleep in a one-piece sleeper equipped with an attached system that fastens securely only across the upper torso, with no constriction of the hips or legs, to create a swaddle. Prior to any use of swaddling for sleep, Discovery Kids must obtain informed written consent from the parent or guardian.

### **Maltreatment of Minors Mandated Reporting Policy**

#### **Who Should Report Child Abuse and Neglect**

- Any person may voluntarily report abuse or neglect.
- If you work with children in a licensed facility, you are legally required or mandated to report and cannot shift the responsibility of reporting to your supervisor or to anyone else at your licensed facility. If you know or have reason to believe a child is being or has been neglected or physically or sexually abused within the preceding three years you must immediately (within 24 hours) make a report to an outside agency.

#### **Where to Report**

- If you know or suspect that a child is in immediate danger, call 911.
- All reports concerning suspected abuse or neglect of children occurring in a licensed facility should be made to the Department of Human Services, Licensing Division's Maltreatment Intake line at (651) 431-6600.
- Reports regarding incidents of suspected abuse or neglect of children occurring within a family or in the community should be made to the Swift County Social Services agency at 320-843-3160 or local law enforcement at 320-843-3133.
- If your report does not involve possible abuse or neglect, but does involve possible violations of Minnesota Statutes or Rules that govern the facility, you should call the Department of Human Services, Licensing Division at (651) 431-6500.

#### **What to Report**

- Definitions of maltreatment are contained in the Reporting of Maltreatment of Minors Act (Minnesota Statutes, section 626.556) and should be attached to this policy.
- A report to any of the above agencies should contain enough information to identify the child involved, any persons responsible for the abuse or neglect (if known), and the nature and extent of the maltreatment and/or possible licensing violations. For reports concerning suspected abuse or neglect occurring within a licensed facility, the report should include any actions taken by the facility in response to the incident.

- An oral report of suspected abuse or neglect made to one of the above agencies by a mandated reporter must be followed by a written report to the same agency within 72 hours, exclusive of weekends and holidays.

### **Failure to Report**

A mandated reporter who knows or has reason to believe a child is or has been neglected or physically or sexually abused and fails to report is guilty of a misdemeanor. In addition, a mandated reporter who fails to report maltreatment that is found to be serious or recurring maltreatment may be disqualified from employment in positions allowing direct contact with persons receiving services from programs licensed by the Department of Human Services and by the Minnesota Department of Health, and unlicensed Personal Care Provider Organizations.

### **Retaliation Prohibited**

An employer of any mandated reporter shall not retaliate against the mandated reporter for reports made in good faith or against a child with respect to whom the report is made. The Reporting of Maltreatment of Minors Act contains specific provisions regarding civil actions that can be initiated by mandated reporters who believe that retaliation has occurred.

### **Internal Review**

When the facility has reason to know that an internal or external report of alleged or suspected maltreatment has been made, the facility must complete an internal review within 30 calendar days and take corrective action, if necessary, to protect the health and safety of children in care. The internal review must include an evaluation of whether:

- (i) related policies and procedures were followed;
- (ii) the policies and procedures were adequate;
- (iii) there is a need for additional staff training;
- (iv) the reported event is similar to past events with the children or the services involved;  
and
- (v) there is a need for corrective action by the license holder to protect the health and safety of children in care.

### **Primary and Secondary Person or Position to Ensure Internal Reviews are Completed**

The internal review will be completed by the Benson Community Education Director. If this individual is involved in the alleged or suspected maltreatment, the Superintendent of Schools will be responsible for completing the internal review.

### **Documentation of the Internal Review**

The facility must document completion of the internal review and make internal reviews accessible to the commissioner immediately upon the commissioner's request.

### **Corrective Action Plan**

Based on the results of the internal review, the license holder must develop, document, and implement a corrective action plan designed to correct current lapses and prevent future lapses in performance by individuals or the license holder, if any.

### Staff Training

The license holder must provide training to all staff related to the mandated reporting responsibilities as specified in the Reporting of Maltreatment of Minors Act (Minnesota Statutes, section 626.556). The license holder must document the provision of this training in individual personnel records, monitor implementation by staff, and ensure that the policy is readily accessible to staff, as specified under Minnesota Statutes, section 245A.04, subdivision 14.

**The mandated reporting policy must be provided to parents of all children at the time of enrollment in the child care program and must be made available upon request.**