

# Policies Handbook

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**Please be sure to initial & sign your Policies Agreement sheet as you read thru the Policies.**

## **WELCOME TO CHRISTINE'S FAMILY DAYCARE**

The purpose of this parent handbook is to outline the policies and procedures under which I operate as a licensed child care provider. This is my home as well as my business, so please be respectful of my family and home by adhering to the policies and procedures outlined in the parent handbook. I realize this is a lot of information to absorb. Because of this, please keep your parent handbook accessible so you can periodically review my policies and procedures as necessary. The provider reserves the right to amend any portion of the policies and/or contract any time. If and when the provider does make a change to the policies and/or contract you will be given a copy. Every attempt will be made to give at least two weeks or more notice of change.

## **REGISTRATION CHECKLIST**

The following forms need to be read, completed and/or signed prior to enrollment:

1. Parent Handbook (read)
2. Parent-Provider Contract (complete/sign/date)
3. Health Inventory form (complete/sign/date by parent & child's dr.)
4. Emergency Information sheet (complete/sign/date)
5. Lead Testing form (complete/sign/date)
6. Emergency Consent for Medical Treatment (complete/sign/date)
7. Photo permission (complete/sign/date)
8. Authorization (complete/sign/date)

## **COMMUNICATION**

It's important that you feel comfortable with my policies and procedures. I'm always open to suggestions and feel communication is a very important part of a quality daycare. If there are any problems or concerns in the future, I encourage you to talk to me about them. Drop off & pick up times are not a good time to have a discussion, as the other children still need my attention during business hours. Please call, text or email me so we can discuss in private.

## **DAYCARE HOURS**

The days and hours your child will be cared for are outlined in your contract. Rates are based on your contracted days & hours. Please understand that each family has different contracted hours so I may have other children here earlier and/or later than yours. Please do not arrive earlier or pick up later than your contracted times without prior approval. Any time outside of our agreement is considered overtime.

## **OVERTIME RATE FEE**

If your child is picked up after your contracted pick-up time, it's considered overtime. There will be a late fee of \$1.00 per minute, for every minute that you pick up after your contracted time. This is the time when the parent walks through the door. This fee must be paid on the next business day with cash, Zelle, or Venmo. If a child is not picked up at the contracted pick-up time & no phone call is received, I will start calling the emergency contacts (starting with the parents). *Please be courteous and arrive on time. Chronic late pick-ups are subject to termination.* Late fees are a penalty & will not be included in the total amount paid for tax purposes.

## **SECURITY DEPOSIT**

A non-refundable security deposit equal to 2 weekly payments is due at the time of enrollment. The security deposit will be held & applied to the last 2 weeks at the daycare only if the proper 30 day written termination notice is given (see Termination policy). If a spot is being held for more than 30 days, the first week's payment will also be due with the security deposit.

## **TERMINATION**

The contract may be terminated by parent or provider by giving a 30-day written notice in advance of the ending date, with the exception of gross misconduct on part of the parent or child. This is grounds for immediate termination. Payment for the last 30 days is due regardless of attendance. The deposit will be applied to the last 2 weeks of care only if the proper notice is given. If proper notice is not given, the deposit will be forfeited.

## **PAYMENTS**

Payment will be made in advance on the first day your child is contracted for care of each week. Payments may be made by Zelle or Venmo. I will also accept cash or checks but prefer the other options. Checks should be made payable to: Christine Hernandez. Full payment is due every week, regardless of attendance. There are no refunds or discounts given for illnesses, late arrivals, early departures, parental vacations, days off or if care is suspended for non-payment. Fees are based on contract, not attendance. If the daycare is closed on a day payment is due, payments will be due on the next day the daycare is open.

Late payments are not accepted. If payment is not made promptly on your first day of care each week, the child may not be cared for, care may be terminated, and the deposit will be forfeited.

## **RETURNED CHECK FEE**

If a check is returned, the parent will be charged \$30 payable with CASH ONLY on the next business day. Childcare services may be suspended until full payment and the Returned Check Fee have been made. Cash, Zelle, or Venmo will be the only method of payments accepted thereafter. Returned check fees are a penalty & will not be included in the total amount paid for tax purposes.

## **LEGAL FEES**

If it becomes necessary for me to resort to legal action to collect any outstanding balances, parent will be responsible for all legal fees & any other related debts incurred (i.e. missed days off work for court dates, court fees, etc.)

## **CHILD'S ABSENCE**

If your child will be absent, please let the provider know as soon as possible so the day's activities won't be held up waiting for your child to arrive. There are no refunds or discounts when a child is absent. When a family goes on vacation, payment can still be made on time using Zelle, Venmo, or postdating a check. Childcare fees are based on contract, not attendance.

## **HOLIDAYS**

The daycare will be closed for the following holidays with regular pay when they fall on a day when the children are regularly scheduled for care:

- Martin Luther King Day
- President's Day
- Providers Birthday Feb 27 (if it falls on a weekday)
- Spring Break (I will close the same week HCPSS close for spring break)
- Memorial Day
- Juneteenth
- 4th of July & day after
- Labor Day
- Columbus Day
- Veteran's Day
- Thanksgiving Break (the day before & after)
- Winter Break (I will close the same week HCPSS close for winter break)

*Note: If the holiday falls on a Saturday daycare may be closed the Friday before. If the holiday falls on a Sunday daycare may be closed the Monday after.*

## **PROVIDER'S VACATION**

The Provider will have 8 days paid vacation per calendar year to use in a whole or on a day-to-day basis. Plenty of notice will be provided. Parent will be required to pay for the provider's vacation.

## **PROVIDER'S SICK/PERSONAL DAYS**

The Provider will have 4 sick/personal/training days paid per calendar year. Parent will be required to pay for the provider's sick/personal days.

## **BEREAVEMENT DAYS**

The Provider will have 3 paid bereavement days per year, if ever needed.

## **JURY DUTY**

The Provider will be paid if/when required to report for jury duty.

## **BACK-UP CARE**

Parents are responsible for finding back-up care for their children during provider vacations, holidays, and sick/personal days resulting in the daycare closing.

## **INCLEMENT WEATHER**

If Howard County Public schools are closed due to bad weather, I will be closed as well. If Howard County Public schools have a delayed opening, I will open on a delay as well.

## **PET**

This daycare home has a dog named "Ollie". He loves children but not adults that he doesn't interact with on a regular basis. He will be kept upstairs away from the daycare children/parents. If you ever arrive to the daycare and Ollie is sitting at the door. Wait for me to put him upstairs before entering.

## **MEALS**

Breakfast should be given to your child before they arrive at the daycare. Please do not let the children walk into the daycare eating or drinking. All food & drinks must be kept in the kitchen area & eaten during our scheduled meal times. Babies are an exception to this policy.

Parents must send a lunch and afternoon snack. I provide 2% milk and water (I provide the cups). When packing your child's lunch, please keep in mind that I usually have 4-6 children to help get their lunches ready for so send simple things (nothing too messy). Please send food that you know your child likes to eat. Please do not send candy, gum, frozen microwave meals, Easy Mac, foods that have to be prepared, put in the oven or cooked on the stovetop. If you send something that needs to go in the microwave, please put it in a microwavable container (and already cut-up) so it's less preparation and clean up. You can also send food that needs to be heated in a thermos, already warmed up.

For infants under 16 months: Parent must provide bottles, formula & baby food (I provide baby spoons).

For children 16 months & up: I always encourage children to feed themselves, so keep that in mind when you pack their lunch. Finger foods are the best choice for children at this stage. Some suggestions for lunches to pack for children at this stage are: sandwiches/lunch meat, cheese, fruit, vegetables, hot dogs, and/or chicken nuggets. Please cut up anything that is not bite size & have everything ready to serve. Some suggestions for snacks to pack for children at this stage are: goldfish, raisins, cheerios (dry cereal), puffs, granola bars, and/or crackers.

For children ages 2 & older: I prefer that you pack a lunch (with ice pack) as if they were going to school.

It's VERY important that you note any allergies your child may have to any type of food and/or beverage.

## **EVACUATION PROCEDURES**

In the event of an emergency and/or natural disaster and the children have to be evacuated, you will be notified as soon as possible. My emergency location of choice is the Savage Library. A notice will be posted at the daycare with all information on the alternative sight. Directions to the Savage Library are as follows: From my daycare/home (on Horsham Drive) go to the stop sign, cross Knights Bridge Road and make a left onto Durness Lane. The Savage Library will be on the left.

## **PERSONAL PROPERTY/TOYS**

The daycare provides a wide variety of toys to play with. Please do not bring any toys from home (infants are an exception). Children have a difficult time sharing with others, and it's even harder with their own special toy. There's also the possibility the toys will get lost or broken. Should the child deliberately destroy the daycare toys or other property through misuse or willfulness, the parent will be required to replace it. Exceptions being their special blanket or stuffed animal which will be put away in their cubby until naptime. The Provider is not responsible for the child's personal items if they get lost or broken.

Please make sure the children do not bring anything to the daycare that poses a choking hazard such as coins, marbles, rocks, etc.

## **CLOTHING/SUPPLIES**

Please do not send your child to daycare in pajamas (infants are an exception) or dress shoes. There's a good possibility your child will get dirty throughout the day, so please dress your child accordingly for play. The provider is not responsible for stained or ruined clothing. We do go out in most weather so please bring your child prepared with a coat, comfortable shoes, hats, or any other clothing appropriate for the day. Please write your child's name or initials on the tags of their coats/jackets in order to prevent any clothing mix-ups.

Each child must have a full set of extra clothing in their cubby or bag for emergencies. If your child brings home a soiled set of clothing, please replace the extra set the next day. Please check your child's extra clothing periodically to make sure they still fit and are season appropriate. If you do not provide an extra set of clothing & your child has an accident, you will be contacted & asked to drop off a change of clothing immediately.

Parents with infants must provide bibs, burp cloth, pacifier (if they use one), diapers, diaper rash cream & wipes.

Parents must supply sunscreen (preferably the spray kind) in the spring/summer. Please spray sunscreen on your child in the morning on warm/hot days. I will re-apply as needed throughout the day.

Each child will have their own cubby located in the hallway closet by the front door. This is where you can store the child's lunch & supplies.

I supply a blanket for each child sleeping on a cot. Linens will be washed every weekend. No blankets will be given to children under 1 in their pack n play.

## **POTTY TRAINING**

I will assist in potty training with the understanding that it will only work if we work together and as long as the child is ready. The initial start needs to be done at home first, either during a vacation or over a long weekend with success before it can be effectively started at daycare. The child **MUST** be showing general signs of readiness: *demonstrates initiative behavior, dislikes wet or dirty diapers, able to pull elastic waist pants up and down on their own, is aware of the "need to go" and shows it by telling you or asks to use the potty.* Please **DO NOT** switch your child to pull ups at the daycare until they are actually having success using the potty at home. Pull ups are harder to change vs. a diaper.

Clothing should be easy to manage to encourage self-help skills. Children should be able to pull their own pants up/down. Buckles, buttons, belts, overalls & suspenders, when in a hurry to use the bathroom, may create a problem. Parents must supply: several pull ups (must have refastenable sides), wipes & a change of clothing (including socks). Pull ups are required until the child is completely potty trained. A child is fully potty trained when they can tell me when they need to go and they use the bathroom on their own with no help. They have to have dry pull-ups with no accidents here at daycare for at least 2 weeks before they can switch over to underwear. If they start having accidents in underwear, we will have to start over with pull-ups again.

Communication between parents and the daycare provider is imperative for a successful transition from diapers to underwear. Please talk to the provider when you're ready to start potty training so we can get on the same page with it.

## **EMERGENCY CONTACT INFORMATION**

It's very important that all emergency contact information is kept up to date and correct. Please inform me immediately of any changes to keep your information current (new address, employer, phone number, etc.).

## **IMMUNIZATIONS**

Parents must bring an updated copy of the child's immunization records each time the child receives a new shot. I prefer that children under the age of 2 not return to daycare for 24 hours after they receive shots in case of a reaction. Please try to schedule appointments in the afternoon prior to a day off or on a Friday afternoon so you can monitor your child 24 hours after receiving their shots.

## **NAPTIME**

Nap time will be scheduled for a few hours after lunch each day. Children will sleep on their own individual cot (infants will sleep in a pack n play) in a quiet, restful area. No child is forced to sleep; however, they're encouraged to remain quiet on their cot/pack n play during this time. I prefer there is no drop-off or pick-up during nap time. Infants will nap at various times according to their individual needs.

## **MEDICATION**

State regulations prevent a Daycare Provider from administering prescription or non-prescription medication without written parental AND doctor permission on a completed, signed, and dated medication authorization form, provided by the office. The medication authorization form must be received by the provider before any medication is administered. Medications may not be administered to a child unless at least one dose of the medication has been given to the child at home.

Prescription medication can only be given when it's in the original container with the child's name; date of the prescription; name of the medication; medication dosage; administration schedule; If applicable, special instructions, such as "take with food"; duration of the prescription; expiration date that states when the medication is no longer useable. Medication must be handed to the provider for safe storage.

Topical Applications. A diaper rash product, sunscreen, or insect repellent supplied by a child's parent may be applied without prior approval of a licensed health practitioner.

## **SICKNESS POLICY**

If your child shows any signs/symptoms at all, please text/call provider to get approval to bring child.

For the health and safety of your child, myself, my family, and all of the children in my daycare, PLEASE DO NOT BRING YOUR CHILD TO DAYCARE IF HE/SHE IS SICK. If a child cannot participate in normal daycare routines, that child should not be at the daycare.

State Day Care regulations prohibit Family Day Care Providers from caring for a child who has a fever, rash, diarrhea, nausea, sore throat/strep throat, or other symptoms of acute or contagious illness. A child who has any of those conditions should be kept home. The child needs to be symptom free for a full 24-48 hours prior to readmission. Furthermore, a child with a frequent, active cough and/or constant runny nose that don't improve with-in a few days should be kept at home or seen by a doctor.

I EXPECT YOU TO NOTIFY ME IMMEDIATELY WHEN YOUR CHILD IS DIAGNOSED WITH ANY INFECTIOUS ILLNESS SO I MAY THEN NOTIFY THE PARENTS OF OTHER CHILDREN IN MY CARE.

If symptoms should arise while the child is in my care, the child will be separated from the other children and the parent will be notified immediately so that arrangements can be made for the child to be picked up. Once the child is removed from daycare due to illness, *YOUR CHILD MAY NOT RETURN TO DAYCARE UNTIL SYMPTOMS REQUIRING REMOVAL ARE NO LONGER PRESENT FOR A FULL 24-48 HOUR PERIOD WITHOUT TYLENOL/MOTRIN, OR BE ACCOMPANIED BY A DOCTOR'S NOTE* and the child is otherwise feeling well enough to participate in our normal routine. This benefits your child, the other children, myself & my family. Your compliance is appreciated, and will be compensated with assurance that all sick children will be kept home. Continual disregard of sick policy may result in immediate termination of contract. If I am unavailable due to illness, I will give you as much notice as possible. Parents are responsible for finding alternate care during the provider's absences.

### Fever

Your child MAY NOT attend daycare with a fever period (even if it's from immunizations). No exceptions! My policy is that your child must remain free of fever without Tylenol/Motrin for a full 24-48 hours before returning to daycare. The 24-48 hours begins when your child's fever has broken and remains in a normal range without Tylenol/Motrin. Fevers are usually signs of infection.

### Diarrhea and/or vomiting

A child with diarrhea and/or vomiting should be kept home for a full 48 hours after symptoms have resolved and the child is able to keep down food & fluids.

## **COVID**

Should daycare have to close down due to myself or one of the children or parents testing positive for Covid, payment is still due during the closure.

## **PARKING**

When dropping off and picking up, you may park in my driveway or block it, or park in a "visitor" parking spot. Please don't park in a numbered parking spot or block the mailboxes, fire hydrant or my neighbor's driveways.

## FIELD TRIP & OUTINGS

On occasion, we will be going on outings. These outings will be to the neighborhood park & Savage Library. In the event there is a field trip, it will be planned & a permission slip will be sent home (very rare occasion). If a situation arises & we have to leave the home for any reason, parents will be contacted by text or email.

## ARRIVALS & DEPARTURES

Please let me know as soon as possible if a child will be absent, getting picked up earlier than normal or arriving later than normal (if more than 30 minutes). I prefer that there are no drop-off or pick-ups during naptime (1-3pm). Parents may walk in if the front door is open (during my business hours).

If a child does not arrive at the normal time and no phone call is received, I will assume the child is not coming and go on with our normal activities and/or make other arrangements for the day.

It's normal for some children to have difficulty separating from parents, or cry when dropping off. Please be brief during these transition times. The longer you prolong the departure, the harder it gets (for both parent and child). A smile, hug, and a reassuring word that you will be back soon are all that's needed. In my experience, children are always quick to get involved in play or activities as soon as the parents are gone. Never leave without telling your child goodbye!

Please be brief at both drop-off & pick-up times. This is a time of testing, when two different authority figures are present (parent & provider). Children will test to see if the rules still apply. Please be in control of your child during these times. I expect parents to back up my rules.

No one other than the parents or authorized persons will be allowed to pick up your child without prior arrangement. If someone other than the parent picking up the child, please notify the provider in advance with a phone call, email or text. If the child isn't old enough to identify the person picking them up, I may ask for identification.

If there's a court order restricting one parent away from the child, I must have a written note from the custodial parent in my file to that effect. Otherwise, I cannot prevent the non-custodial parent from picking up the child.

## DAILY SCHEDULE

This schedule is meant to give you an idea of your child's day. Actual times and activities may vary depending on time of the year, weather, age and temperament of the children. Age-appropriate activities are scheduled with the flexibility allowed to respond to the needs of each individual child and their various ages.

- **8:30 - 9:30** Drop-offs, welcome children, free-play
- **9:30 - 10:30** Learning activities, structured play, puzzles, books, music, etc.
- **10:30 - 12:00** Outdoor play or free-play
- **12:00 - 1:00** Clean up, lunch time
- **1:00 - 3:00** Nap time
- **3:00 - 3:30** Afternoon snack
- **3:30 - 4:30** Pick-ups, outdoor play or free-play

## HOUSE RULES

1. All food and drinks must be kept in the kitchen area.
2. No name calling, bullying, yelling or screaming.
3. Lifting, carrying, climbing, or sitting on other children of any age is not permitted.
4. No standing, bouncing, or jumping on the furniture.
5. No picking-up, pulling, poking, pushing or squeezing of infants.
6. All children are asked to help clean up before lunch & going home.
7. No running, jumping, wrestling, play fighting, or wild horseplay (including hitting, pushing, biting, grabbing, kicking, pulling, pinching or throwing things). We simply keep our hands and feet to ourselves.
8. Shoes must be removed in the foyer area when it's wet outside. This is for the safety of the children who lay & play on the floor & general cleanliness.
9. Children are not allowed to climb on the railings to the steps in the hallway.
10. I prefer that no one pushes the buttons on the keypad on the front door.



## **DISCIPLINE**

The children are explained the rules of the daycare frequently, so they know what's expected of them. Once a child is old enough to understand the rules and disobeys them by exhibiting inappropriate behavior (hitting, aggression, etc.), hurts others, or property, the following developmentally appropriate guidance techniques will be used:

1. **Positive Reinforcement:** The child will be encouraged when he or she is demonstrating acceptable behavior.
2. **Redirection:** The child is redirected to another activity and given an opportunity to try again at another time.
3. **Time-Out:** This technique is only used when a child repeatedly will not follow directions or listen to my words, is exhibiting temper tantrum type behavior, hurting one's self, others, or equipment. The child is separated from the group for an age-appropriate amount of time (one minute per one year of age). When the child shows that he or she is ready to demonstrate acceptable behavior, they are encouraged to join the rest of the group to try again.
4. **Last Resort:** When a child's behavior is continually upsetting or dangerous to others, parents will be contacted by a note, email or phone call. If the problem can't be resolved, arrangements will have to be made for the child to go elsewhere for care.

## **SCREEN TIME**

Television will be allowed on a limited basis, with a teacher-chosen show that is educational, age appropriate and interactive. This will mainly be during drop-off & pick-up time.

**Thank you for the opportunity to work with you and care for your child. I look forward to a future of keeping your child happy and safe!**