



HUCKLEBERRY'S FRIENDS

PARENT HANDBOOK

2012

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Dear Mom and Dad

Every day I get bigger and better. Don't worry about what I am unable to do today; I will be able to do things better and faster as my mind and body grow.

I can do little things with my little muscles now; later I will be able to do BIG things with my big muscles! Sometimes my body shouts at me and tells me to run and jump over my toys, climb over the furniture, or wiggle all over. Then it's harder for me to sit still and draw, listen to stories, or cut out pictures. You can help me feel good about my body and the way I use it. I will then feel better about myself and my thoughts. I'll have more fun with my friends and won't need to "show off."

I'm not being bad when I'm curious; I want you to like me, but I also need to learn a lot on my own. My world is so exciting! If I feel good about my body, I like the rest of me. When I do things well, I feel good. But, having to keep up with others all the time makes me sad; losing isn't fun, and when you compare me with others, it makes me sad. Please love me because I'm special. Sometimes I won't do very well. You may know that I can act better, but sometimes I'm not quite sure of myself. The world is a big place full of new and scary things. Be patient with me and help me. I will try to be like you; if you are happy about how my body is growing, I will be too. More than anybody else, you can help me to grow properly and have fun.

Thank you for spending time with me, I know you are very busy.

I love you very much!

Your Preschooler

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About Huckleberry's Friends

Philosophy

Huckleberry's Friends began from a desire to offer the best child care possible for working parents. We believe that a healthy, loving, learning environment is essential to development in early childhood. Each child deserves a clean, safe, attractive, age-appropriate environment in which to spend each day. This environment should provide the opportunity for self-expression through music, art, dramatic play, games, indoor/outdoor play, and creative learning experiences. The mental and emotional growth of each child should be nurtured at an individual pace.

Our curriculum planning reflects our emphasis on teaching "life skills" and attitudes of social responsiveness toward each other. Our activities are centered on central themes, which are planned in accordance with the developmental level of each group. This guides the development of cognitive, language, fine motor, gross motor, self-help and social skills.

We value the opportunity to serve each family.

Services

Huckleberry's Friends offers quality childcare for children aged six weeks to twelve years old. Children are grouped together by approximate age, with levels of development and individual needs in mind.

We provide well balanced breakfast, lunch, and afternoon snack each day to all age groups. All meals are prepared fresh by our nutrition specialist, in our commercial grade kitchen on-site, thus ensuring each child receives a hot, nutritious meal each day.

Transportation to and from area schools is provided for our school-age program, as is full day care on school holidays, breaks and track-outs.

Goals

- To provide a safe and healthy environment for your child
- To provide experiences that will contribute to the physical, intellectual, social and emotional growth of each child
- To help each child form joy and satisfaction in accomplishments, thereby developing a positive self-image
- To help each child question thoughtfully and think for him/herself
- To provide readiness materials that will be beneficial for formal education preparation
- To help each child form good health habits
- To help each child learn to express feelings in appropriate ways

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Enrollment Procedures

Application Requirements

Parents are required to submit completed documents at the time of enrollment and prior to classroom attendance. Payment of registration fee and first week of tuition are also due at this time. These fees are nonrefundable and serve as a security deposit to secure your child's space in his/her classroom.

In order to attend, the following documentation must be on file:

Required:

- ☐ Application containing the following information:
 - ✓ Child Information
 - ✓ Parent/Guardian Information
 - ✓ Emergency Care Information
 - ✓ Authorization for Pick-Up by anyone other than the parent/guardian
 - ✓ Emergency Medical Care Authorization
 - ✓ Emergency Medical Care Transportation Agreement

It is the responsibility of the parent to report to the facility administrator(s) any change of address, contact information, employment, emergency contact persons, and medical information.

- ☐ Medical Exam

Each child entering the Center must have a current physical assessment/exam by a licensed physician or the physician's authorized agent.

- ☐ Immunization Record

Parents must report immunizations as they occur to ensure our records are kept current and accurate.

- ☐ Documentation of Receipt of Parent Handbook

As applicable:

- ☐ Infant Feeding Schedule (infants under 15 months old)
- ☐ Infant Sleep Position Waivers (infants under 15 months old)
- ☐ Authorization for Routine Transportation (to/from area schools, School-Age Program)

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Parent Responsibilities

Parents are encouraged to visit the center with his/her child prior to the child's first full day of attendance. This will give the parent an opportunity to meet the teachers and discuss any information the teacher may find helpful about his/her new student. It also gives the child an opportunity to interact and become acquainted with the other children in his/her new classroom. At least one three to four hour visit is recommended.

The following policies help us to provide a healthy, sanitary environment, therefore we request that:

- Children arrive clean, wearing fresh clothing and diapering.
- Soiled clothing is taken home at the end of each day (for sanitation reasons soiled clothing is not rinsed or washed).
- Blankets and soft toys are taken home and washed at least weekly.
- All personal belongings (including blankets, diapers, wipes, infant food/formula, etc.) are clearly labeled with your child's first and last name. We will not be responsible for items lost or damaged.
- Diaper bags are not left in the Center at any time (due to state regulations).
- Hazardous items may not be stored on site (i.e. medications, liquids, lotions, sharp objects, etc.). Please contact an administrator regarding identification and storage of such items as needed.

Necessities to Provide

Because accidents happen, parents are asked to provide two changes of clothing for each child. For potty trainers, more may be necessary. Each child will have storage space for clothing so that you may choose to leave it at the Center. Please, remember to change it with the seasons.

During warm, summer months, we also request that parents provide a sport-styled water bottle for his/her child's use during outdoor activities. The water bottle will be cleaned daily and replenished routinely by a facility staff member.

The Center will provide cots, mats, and sheets for each child at rest time. Your child may choose to bring a favorite pillow, blanket or soft toy for comfort. Please be sure these items are small enough to fit in his/her cubby. Personal items must be taken home to be laundered on a weekly basis.

Parents must provide diapers, wipes, baby food, and bottles for infants. Infant bottles and food must be in sealed containers and labeled with the child's name and date of attendance. Unused portions of food items are discarded for sanitation purposes.

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Facility Operations

Hours of Operation

The Center is open from 6:30 a.m. – 6:30 p.m. Monday through Friday, with the exception of dates as indicated below:

New Year's Day
Good Friday
Memorial Day
Independence Day

Labor Day
Thanksgiving Day & Day After
Christmas Eve
Christmas Day & Day After

If indicated dates of closure fall on Saturday and/or Sunday, parents will be notified of alternative dates as early as possible.

Inclement Weather

We will make every effort to operate on our regular schedule during inclement/severe weather. The safety of our children, staff, and their families are our first priorities in determining facility delays and/or closures.

Should conditions warrant facility delays and/or closures, announcements will be made using local television and radio stations cooperative of broadcasting such information. Parents may also monitor our website and/or Facebook page for the most up-to-date information:

Website: www.huckleberrysfriends.com
Facebook: www.facebook.com/HuckleberrysFriends

Please note that no adjustments are made to tuition during closings and/or delays.

Arrival and Departure of Children

Parents are required to indicate the arrival and departure time of the children on the "sign in" in sheets in each classroom and/or lobby area(s). For safety and accountability of all children, each child must be accompanied to and from their assigned classroom by their parent/guardian. Under no circumstances are children to be picked up or dropped off at any other location within the Center grounds (including playground areas).

If an individual other than the parent/guardian is picking up a child, the parent must notify administration and the child's teacher in advance. The individual must present valid form of photographic identification (driver's license, identification card, passport, etc.) prior to departing with the child.

We request that your child be in attendance with his/her classroom before 10:00 a.m. and not arriving between the hours of 12:00 p.m. and 3:00 p.m. as this is our period of winding down and preparing for naptime. Bringing your child between these hours interferes with your child's classroom routine and further delays other children's much needed rest.

Should your child have a medical appointment causing delayed attendance, we are required to request a note from your doctor stating such visit.

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Safety Tips during Arrival and Departure

1. Please turn your car off and take the keys out of the ignition before entering the Center.
2. Please have your radio set at a level conducive to hearing outside noises easily.
3. Please maintain a minimal vehicular speed when approaching the facility.
4. Please do not leave small children unattended. We know it's convenient to not have to bring in your small ones or infants during your visit – no matter how brief. Accidents can and will happen at any time, no matter where you are or what you are doing.

Tuition and Fees

All tuition is due weekly and must be received prior to the date of service to be provided (i.e. tuition must be received no later than the Friday before when care is to be provided the following week). We will gladly arrange a payment schedule to suit individual needs as long as the account remains current.

Parents are encouraged to make tuition payments in the form a check or money order. Administration may not always have the proper change for your payment if cash is used. Payments may be dropped in the Tuition Payment Box located in the lobby. Please note that we are not responsible for cash payments deposited in the Tuition Payment Box. If you have a cash payment, please request a written receipt at time of payment to ensure proper account crediting.

Please note that tuition payments are required to maintain your child's space in his/her classroom, regardless of attendance.

Vacation Policy

After your child has been enrolled full-time for one continuous year, you will receive one week of vacation per child, per year, at no charge. Vacation time must be taken for five consecutive days of absence within one calendar week. It is not required that vacation time be used for the same week for each child. There must be a twelve month period between free vacation weeks. This is for full-time enrollments only; unfortunately, we are unable to extend this offer to part-time enrollments.

Please provide administrators with as much advance notice as possible of when you would like to use your vacation time.

Late Pick-Up Fees

Parents will be charged late pick-up fees if his/her child remains at our facility after regular business hours. Any child left in our care after closing hours will be supervised by a qualified staff member until he/she is picked-up by an appropriately authorized person. A late fee of \$1.00 for each minute after closing hours will be automatically calculated and noted on your tuition account as due. Phone calls to notify of late arrival will not exempt a late pick-up fee charge. We reserve the right to terminate any child's enrollment for abuse of this policy.

After-School Notification Failure Fee

Please notify the center by 1:30 if we do not need to include your child on our regular after-school pick-up rounds. Failure to notify us accordingly causes delays in picking up other schools/children, scheduling delays for children and staff members, and other parents having an extended wait for our return at the center. Therefore, we will charge a Notification Failure Fee of \$5.00 each time this occurs. Recurring offenses will result in exclusion of future pick-ups.

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Returned Check Fees

There will be a \$30.00 service charge for returned checks. Should we receive two or more returned checks within a six-month period, we will no longer accept checks as a method of payment and will require use of cash and/or money orders for all future payments. Returned checks do not provide immunity to late fees.

Late Payment Fee

Tuition balances begin accumulating a late payment fee of \$5.00 per day if not received by the date specified in "Tuition and Fees" above. All services will be immediately suspended for any balance two weeks past due.

Annual Renewal Fee

A renewal fee will be due annually following the initial year of enrollment. This fee is generally equal to the initial registration fee imposed at time of renewal.

Withdrawal

Should you decide to withdraw from Huckleberry's, a minimum of two weeks' notice is required in advance. Any parent failing to do so will be charged the normal tuition rate for two weeks for each child enrolled. Please check with an administrator prior to your child's last day of attendance to resolve any open account balances.

Delinquent Accounts

The Center reserves the right to discontinue services if tuition is two weeks or more delinquent. Legal action may also be taken to collect any unpaid account balances, should you decide to terminate your child's enrollment with unpaid amounts due.

Tuition Assistance / Subsidy Programs

We strive to continuously provide competitive rates for child care services; we also understand that personal circumstances may change and financial obligations may become difficult to reconcile. In efforts to assist with situations such as these, we will be happy to work with you in any way possible to help keep your tuition account current and active.

There are several external agencies ("third-parties") that provide assistance and/or subsidies to parents in need based on the severity of assistance needed. We will gladly review further information regarding assisting agencies with you upon request.

Third-party agencies may only provide partial payment of balances due or to become due, at their discretion. Parents remain responsible for ensuring that child care tuition charges are paid in full prior to time of service; regardless of any assistance/subsidy pledges and/or agreements. Therefore, parents must cover any tuition shortages that may result with "third-party" agreements, including shortages resulting from agency funding shortages and/or interruptions.

We will not reimburse parents for overpayments made by any third-party; reimbursements of overpayments will only be refunded to the issuing party.

We further reserve the right to deny acceptance of any third-party pledge/agreement at our sole discretion.

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Classroom Information

Activities

Individual group schedules and lesson plans are posted in each classroom. Trips away from the Center are common for our older children, especially during the summer months. Parents will be provided with information in advance regarding any off-site functions. Your child's teacher will be happy to review any information with you regarding his/her classroom activities.

Celebrations

Classrooms will celebrate numerous holidays and occasions during the year. Teachers will notify parents of the schedule of events and any requests for volunteers and/or donations as early as possible.

Newsletters

Huckleberry's Friends issues a monthly newsletter containing information related to each individual classroom, upcoming events, dates to remember, and other information pertaining to the facility as a whole, and can be accessed on our website at your convenience.

Rest Periods

With the exception of infants and school age groups, each classroom has a minimum of two hours per day designated for napping/resting to take place after lunch has been completed. Please refer to [Arrival and Departure Procedures](#) for information regarding arrivals/dismissals during rest periods.

Potty Training

Communication between teachers and parents is essential for successful potty training. Each child's progress while potty training will be noted on the child's daily sheet. Making a point to discuss the progress made at home with your child's teacher enables us to make the transition from diaper to toileting as smooth as possible, both for you and your child.

Children are generally ready to start potty training when he/she:

- expresses a consistent interest in toileting,
- shows interest in toileting processes,
- has the ability to stay dry longer, and
- is able to inform others of the need to go to "potty" (or having just done so).

Once the process of "potty-training" and wearing underwear has begun, we would like to continue that process. Reverting back to diapers (or "Pull-Ups") after a child has had several accidents is counterproductive, and inconsistent with our policy of not shaming children. Often, older children interpret wearing diapers and "Pull-Ups" as permission to wet; therefore, we do not allow diapers or "Pull-Ups" in any classroom other than our infant and toddler age groups.

We do expect accidents and ask that parents bring at least six changes of clothes in a backpack, overnight case, etc. Any soiled items will be placed in a plastic bag in your child's cubby. To prepare for the next day, simply replace the soiled outfits with clean ones.

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Facility Policies

Safe Sleep Policy

As a parent, we are sure you are aware of SIDS and its possible causes. Physicians are still unclear of its cause but feel children allowed to sleep on their stomach are at a higher risk of death. Other possible causes are: stuffed animals, loose bedding, pillows, and other excessive items.

Huckleberry's Friends makes every effort to follow the most recent guidelines/procedures in place to eliminate known triggers to SIDS occurrences. As such, we currently abide by the following "Safe Sleep Policy":

- Children under one year of age will be placed on their back to sleep.
- All toys, stuffed animals, baby bags, pillows and excess bedding are not allowed into the crib.
- Do not let your baby overheat. Dress him/her in layers that can be removed as needed.
- For Children with medical conditions, a doctor's note must be provided detailing why the child must not be allowed to sleep on his/her back.
- When a child is put on his/her back to sleep and is at a developmental stage where he/she is able to roll over onto the stomach, you may sign a waiver allowing him/her to remain asleep on his/her stomach.

Homework

Our goal is to offer children a well-balanced program. While we understand the importance that homework plays in the life of a child, as well as for the families we serve, we strive to meet the needs of the whole child. In addition to helping children meet personal academic goals, we recognize our responsibility to give children a chance to socialize, have un-structured play in well-developed centers, have time outdoors, and enjoy a nutritious snack.

Current research shows children concentrate better and are more productive when they've had a chance for a physical break prior to completing homework assignments after school.

As a licensed program, the NC Division of Child Development requires that we offer, at least, three (3) activity choices during a three (3) hour time frame, as well as provide outdoor time to all of our age groups; therefore, our school age classroom schedule reflects snacks and outdoor time as our first afternoon activity upon returning to the Center after school.

It has been studied and proven that children learn and grow through play. It is our mission and goal to reinforce this by providing materials and activity choices that support the North Carolina General Course of Study.

For those choosing to do homework, while we can't promise accuracy and/or completion, we do wish to support the homework choice in the following ways:

- A 20-30 minute time frame to work on homework at the same time as other quiet activity choices
- Providing paper, pencils, and basic resource materials as may be needed
- A semi-secluded place to work on assignments
- Interaction with children completing homework when appropriate

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Discipline and Behavior Management Policy

Praise and positive reinforcement are effective methods of the behavior management of children. When children receive positive, non-violent, and understanding interactions from adults and others, they develop good self-concepts, problem solving abilities, and self-discipline. Based on this belief of how children learn and develop values, this facility will practice the following discipline and behavior management policy:

We:

1. DO praise, reward, and encourage the children.
2. DO reason with and set limits for the children.
3. DO model appropriate behavior for the children.
4. DO modify the classroom environment to attempt to prevent problems before they occur.
5. DO listen to the children.
6. DO provide alternatives for inappropriate behavior to the children.
7. DO provide the children with natural and logical consequences of their behaviors.
8. DO treat the children as people and respect their needs, desires, and feelings.
9. DO ignore minor misbehaviors.
10. DO explain things to children on their levels.
11. DO use short supervised periods of time-out sparingly.
12. DO stay consistent in our behavior management program.
13. Do use effective guidance and behavior management techniques that focus on a child's development.

We:

1. DO NOT spank, shake, bite, pinch, push, pull, slap, or otherwise physically punish the children
2. DO NOT make fun of, yell at, threaten, make sarcastic remarks about, use profanity, or otherwise verbally abuse the children.
3. DO NOT shame or punish the children when bathroom accidents occur.
4. DO NOT deny food or rest as punishment.
5. DO NOT relate discipline to eating, resting, or sleeping.
6. DO NOT leave the children alone, unattended, or without supervision.
7. DO NOT place the children in locked rooms, closets, or boxes as punishment.
8. DO NOT allow discipline of children by children.
9. DO NOT criticize, make fun of, or otherwise belittle children's parents, families, or ethnic groups.

We help children resolve conflicts and develop problem solving skills with peers by discussing how the conflict arose and determining how future conflicts can be avoided. All classrooms are monitored both personally and using a video recording system daily, ensuring that all teachers and staff members follow our discipline and behavior management strategies appropriately and effectively.

Outside resources may be necessary to resolve issues concerning a child's behavior or developmental level. The decision to involve these resources may be made by either the parent or the Center Director with the parent's permission. The following local resources can be contacted for assistance with services and support:

- Child Care Resource and Referral
319 Chapanoke Road, Suite 114
Raleigh, North Carolina 27603
www.childcareservices.org
919-779-2220
- The Lucy Daniels Center
9003 Weston Parkway
Cary, North Carolina 27513
<http://www.lucydanielscenter.org/>
info@lucydanielscenter.org
919-677-1400

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"Time-Out"

"Time-out" is the removal of a child for a short period of time (3 to 5 minutes) from a situation in which the child is misbehaving and has not responded to other behavior management techniques. The "timeout" space, usually a chair, is located away from classroom activity but within the teacher's sight or in the administrative office. During "time-out," the child has a chance to think about the misbehavior which led to his/her removal from the group. After a brief interval of no more than 5 minutes, the teacher discusses the incident and appropriate behavior with the child. When the child returns to the group, the incident is over and the child is treated with the same affection and respect shown the other children.

(Adapted from original prepared by Elizabeth Wilson, Student, Catawba Valley Technical College)

Photography

During the year, your child will be participating in many fun and exciting learning activities. We would like to document these activities by photographing and/or filming the classroom activities. We need your support and agreement to allow us to do this. The pictures/filming will be done during classroom activities, field trips, etc. and may be posted on-site, used in our newsletter, slide shows, class projects, and/or school web community.

If you do not wish to allow your child's image(s) to be used for these purposes, please submit a written request to our facility director, indicating your preference. It will be otherwise be considered as agreeable upon enrollment.

Transportation

Trips away from the Center are common occurrences for our older children, especially during the summer months. Parents will be provided information well in advance about these trips in order for questions to be answered and concerns to be addressed prior to the planned off site activity. You will receive a Travel and Activity Authorization Form upon enrollment and annually thereafter. This form is valid for one year and must be completed and signed before your child is allowed to participate in any off premise activity (including before and after school transportation). The Center will keep this permission form on file.

If a child is consistently difficult during activities away from the Center, we will no longer allow him/her to attend any future field trips. Misbehavior on the van and during activities away from the Center endangers the safety of the other children and staff and will not be tolerated.

Parent Participation

Visitation

Huckleberry's Friends maintains an "open door" policy and encourages parents to visit at any time. It is suggested that parents make at least one visit to the Center with their child prior to their first day of attendance.

Parents are invited to join their child at any time; we do, however, request to be notified as early as possible (but no later than 9:00 a.m.) on the day of your visit if you would like to be included in our lunch count, so that we may plan our meal quantities appropriately.

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Volunteering

We encourage parents to volunteer as much time as their schedule allows. This time may be spent reading to the class, participating in special events, aiding the teacher during activities, attending field trips, etc. It makes our children proud when their parent(s) spend time with them in their classroom, and their teachers welcome the opportunity to have you witness firsthand how the classroom functions day to day.

Communication

We feel that regular communication between parents and staff is necessary for quality care. In addition to daily reports for preschool children, we encourage parent/teacher conferences. Either the parent or the teacher may request these at any time. Conferences should focus on any aspect of interest or concern and provide for the cooperation of parents and staff in providing an appropriate learning environment. By discussing issues at a scheduled time, teachers are uninterrupted in caring for all children in the group and parents are given full attention. At least one yearly conference is recommended, however, one conference quarterly is ideal.

Any issue which cannot be resolved between a parent and a teacher may be presented to the Director or Assistant Director of the Center by either party.

Health and Safety

Illness

We appreciate how difficult it can be for parents to take time off work to care for a sick child. Unfortunately, we do not have the facilities to care for sick children. If a child is unable to participate in the activities of the day, including outside play, that child should not attend the Center. This helps the child recover and protects others from contagion.

A child with any of the following will not be admitted:

- Vomiting
- Diarrhea
- Scabies or lice
- Any symptoms indicating infection
- An auxiliary underarm temperature greater than 100°F
- Known or suggestive chicken pox
- Red eye(s) with white or yellow discharge Until 24 hours after treatment begins
- Tuberculosis Until a health professional approves return
- Strep throat Until 24 hours after treatment begins
- Pertussis (whooping cough) Until five (5) days after treatment begins
- Viral Hepatitis A Until one week after onset of jaundice
- Impetigo Until 24 hours after treatment begins
- Any condition for which a physician's or other health professionals written order states that the child must be separated from other children

In the event that a child becomes ill with any of the above, the parent or next of kin will be contacted to pick the child up immediately. Following an illness, a child must be free of fever, without the use of medication for 24 hours before the child may return to care.

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Medications

Child care centers are not required to administer any medication to any child for any reason. However, we understand that children do need some medications in order to attend and participate in their daily activities. If your child requires medication, prescription or otherwise, we will gladly administer all medications once a day, between the hours of 11:00 am and 12:00 pm (noon), with the exception of emergency medications (i.e. EPI-pens, seizure medications, rescue inhalers, etc.). This allows your child's teacher to continuously provide the necessary classroom supervision and instruction to all children in his/her care with limited interruption to the classroom as a whole.

The following requirements must first be met before any medication is administered:

- Specific written dosing/scheduling instructions must be given on designated forms available at the front desk and/or from your child's teacher.
- No medication will be administered after its expiration date.
- Prescription medication must be in its original container bearing the pharmacist's full label, indicating the child's name, date the prescription was filled, the physician's name, the name of the medicine, and directions for dosage.
- Prescribed medication will only be administered to the child for whom the drug is prescribed.
- Over-the-counter medications (with the exception of diaper creams) will not be administered without written authorization from the child's doctor.
- Medications are NOT to be left in a child's bag, and are to be given directly to the child's teacher along with the corresponding authorization form.

All medications will be stored in a locked container in the classroom or kitchen refrigerator, if necessary. Rescue medications such as EPI-Pens will be stored in plain sight in the child's classroom, out of children's reach. It is also the parent/guardian's responsibility to remember to take the medication home daily, if needed.

Parents may complete a six-month blanket permission form for the administration of medications needed for chronic health conditions and must be accompanied by detailed written instructions from the child's physician. All chronic conditions requiring medication must have a medical care plan on file at the time of enrollment.

Blanket permission may be given for up to one year for over-the-counter diaper creams. The parent's written permission must describe the specific conditions under which these medications and creams are to be administered and give detailed instructions on how they are to be administered.

Safety

If there is a serious injury and/or medical problem and a parent or next of kin cannot be reached, the local rescue squad will then be contacted for immediate assistance. If this action is taken, parents/guardians will be notified as soon as contact is made.

Regulations Concerning Sick Children

According to the N.C. Department of Health & Human Services, Division of Child Development, we are unable to care for a child with a diagnosed communicable disease (measles, mumps, chickenpox, etc.) or obvious acute illness. Therefore, please do not send your child to the Center when he/she is sick or has signs of possible contagious disease. If your child has a communicable disease, please keep him/her home until the symptoms have subsided and the child feels well enough participate in Center activities.

HUCKLEBERRY'S FRIENDS PARENT HANDBOOK

Reporting Child Abuse and Neglect

We understand the importance of family unity; however we are required by law to report any symptoms of *suspected* child abuse or neglect to the Wake County Department of Social Services. This facility will abide by this law with no exceptions.

Abuse occurs when a parent or caregiver injures or allows another to injure a child physically or emotionally. Abuse may also occur when a parent or caregiver puts a child at risk of serious injury or allows another to put a child at risk of serious injury. Neglect occurs when a child does not receive proper care, supervision, or discipline, or when a child is abandoned.

Nutrition

The Center provides a morning snack, balanced lunch, and an afternoon snack each day. All menu items are planned in accordance with the U.S. Department of Agriculture meal patterns approved for use by the Child Day Care Commission, meeting all recommended daily nutritional standards.

Menus

The kitchen staff will post all planned menus on our “Parent Information Board” located within the facility weekly; copies are available upon request.

Scheduling

Classroom meal schedules are posted in each classroom and in the front lobby for reference. All meals are served in each classroom and children are encouraged to eat according to their need. While teachers will encourage children to taste foods, children will not be expected to eat any item they refuse or to eat all the food on their plate. Teachers of preschool groups will include information about meals and snacks on each child’s daily report.

Breakfast will be served between 7:45 and 8:30 a.m. Should your child be arriving after 9:00 a.m. and wish to be included in our lunch count for that day, please inform us before 10:00 a.m.; otherwise please provide lunch for your child prior to arriving at the Center (also refer to Arrival and Departure Procedures for information regarding arrivals/dismissals during rest periods).

Food Program

Huckleberry’s Friends participates in the Child and Adult Care Food Program (CACFP), a federally funded nutrition program that plays a vital role in improving the quality of day care and making it more affordable to provide healthy, nutritious meals and snacks to children enrolled. CACFP homes and centers must serve meals and snacks meeting the USDA and CACFP requirements.

Outside Food

In order to ensure compliance with sanitation rules, providing meals from outside sources (“Brown Bagging”) is not allowed. Substitutions are allowed only when a child is diagnosed with food allergies and a physician’s documentation is provided.

Food Allergies: Information concerning children with food allergies is posted in the facility’s kitchen and in each classroom. Please make staff aware of any allergies your child has and provide a physician’s note to substantiate such allergy.

HUCKLEBERRY'S FRIENDS PARENT HANDBOOK

Infants

Parents will be requested to complete an infant feeding schedule prior to their child's first day of attendance. Please correspond with your child's teacher regularly regarding changes in your child's feeding schedule, such as transitions from baby food to table food, to ensure routine progression practices are maintained both at home and at the center.

Birthdays/Special Occasions

Non-nutritional food items can only be served for special occasions and must be supplemented with nutritional food items.

We love to help celebrate children's special days. However, to keep children from feeling that some are more special than others, we ask parents to limit these celebrations to a special snack. Special snacks will be served during the scheduled afternoon snack period for your child's classroom. Please inform his/her teacher of your celebration intentions in advance.

Due to state guidelines, foods prepared from home are not allowed. Commercially prepared cakes, cookies, etc. are permissible provided the ingredients are clearly labeled on each package. Latex balloons, hard candy, and small party favors are also prohibited, due to health/safety concerns.

Diet Restrictions

If a participant has a documented disability that restricts his/her diet, we may provide substitutions as identified by a Licensed Physician. If a participant has a documented medical condition that restricts his/her diet, we must have a medical statement from a Licensed Physician or Recognized Medical Authority (Physician's Assistant or Nurse Practitioner), we may provide the substitution at our discretion. Please have your Physician or Recognized Medical Authority complete and sign a "Medical Statement for CACFP and SFSP Participants Requiring Meal Modifications" form (available upon request) and return the completed form to a facility administrator.

Special Diets: Children who are following special diets must have a physician or dietitian substantiate the need in writing and have their meals provided from another source than our facility.

Civil Rights Notification to Parents/Guardians

Because Huckleberry's Friends participates in the Child and Adult Care Food Program (CACFP), all parents/guardians are requested to fill out a Child Food Program Eligibility Application each year in order to maintain state compliance. On the required enrollment/eligibility form, the parent or guardian has the option to provide the ethnicity (either Hispanic or Non-Hispanic) and also race (one or more may be chosen). CACFP requests that parents/guardians provide the ethnic/racial information on the enrollment form to ensure that the child is properly registered. If the ethnicity/race is not completed by the parent or guardian, we are required to provide this information through self-observation.

Nondiscriminatory Policy

In accordance with Federal law and U.S. Department of Agriculture policy, this institution is prohibited from discriminating on the basis of race, color, religion, political party, national origin, sex, age, or disability.

HUCKLEBERRY'S FRIENDS

PARENT HANDBOOK

Confidentiality Policy

Procedures:

1. The following data is collected for each participant upon enrollment and annually thereafter while participating in the Child and Adult Care Food Program (CACFP) and is considered confidential:
 - Ethnic Data
 - Racial Data
 - Income Eligibility Data
2. Data is maintained under safeguards, restricting access of records to authorized personnel.
3. Access to data is restricted to the following staff:
 - Owner/Director/Assistant Director
 - CACFP responsible staff member
4. Ethnic and racial data is used for reporting purposes only.
5. Data collected will be maintained on file for 3 years.
6. At the end of the retention period, data shall be shredded and discarded.

Policy:

1. The Director/Owner shall maintain all data in the strictest confidence.
2. All records containing confidential information will be maintained securely in files accessible only to representatives of the facility/center.
3. Ethnic and racial data are used for reporting purposes only and are not used for any discriminatory purposes.

Emergency Situations

Fire and Tornado Drills

The state of North Carolina requires all licensed child care centers to have at least one unannounced fire drill per month. During these events, staff members will remove/secure all children promptly and safely, as set forth in the facility Disaster Plan. These monthly drills are a disruption and may frighten some children, but for the safety of all staff and children in the Center, they cannot be avoided.

Disaster Plan

Huckleberry's Friends has plans and procedures in place whereby the facility, or parts thereof, can be evacuated/secured quickly in the unusual case of an emergency. Causes for action include fire, tornado, explosion, flood, severe thunderstorm, severe winter storm, hurricane, toxic fumes, electrical failure and/or structural failure. In an emergency situation, staff members will direct the evacuation of our facility as rapidly and safely as possible.

In an effort to keep your child safe, the North Carolina Division of Child Development (DCD) has approved new training in Emergency Preparedness and Response. The staff of Huckleberry's Friends has participated in this training. During your child's enrollment, we will be teaching age-appropriate emergency skills to your child while we focus continually on being prepared in case of any emergency.

HUCKLEBERRY'S FRIENDS PARENT HANDBOOK

With the safety of your child in mind, we would like to make you aware that we have developed an *Emergency Preparedness and Response Plan* for our facility. This detailed Plan is comprehensive and involves our local emergency agencies. We are confident that we can do what it takes to protect all of the children in our care in the event that they must be evacuated in place (remain in a protected part of our facility until advised that it is safe to leave) or evacuated off-site to a safe area, away from our facility.

In-Place Evacuations

Could occur during:

1. A tornado or other weather-related emergency made it too dangerous to leave the safety of our facility;
2. Toxic chemical spills in close proximity to our facility;
3. Threats of a violent incident (such as suspicious persons or activities in the vicinity); or
4. Local emergency personnel orders to do so.

If children in our facility are to evacuate in place:

1. We are prepared to provide supervision, food, bottled water, and shelter.
2. Children will not be released until local emergency officials assure us that it is safe to do so.
3. We will provide related information as soon as it is permissibly safe to do so.

Off-Site Evacuations

Could occur during:

1. A hurricane or other weather-related emergency making it dangerous to stay on-site;
2. Imminent threats of safety in the area (e.g. flooding, terrorism)
3. Threats directed toward the facility specifically; or
4. Directions given by local emergency personnel to evacuate.

If the children in our facility are to evacuate off-site:

1. Children will be safely transported to a secure facility, designated by Emergency Management Personnel or our Emergency Plan.
2. Information will be provided to parents by:
 - a. Individual phone calls
 - b. AM Radio
 - c. FM Radio
 - d. Local Television Station(s)
 - e. Our Web site – www.huckleberrysfriends.com
3. Children will be released from an emergency off-site location to a parent, legal guardian, and/or other authorized individual(s) as indicated in the child's enrollment application only. A photo ID of the adult will be required.

The safety of our children and staff members is our highest priority. Please rest assured that in the event of an emergency, all staff members will ensure the safety of all children in our care.

Summary of the North Carolina Child Care Law and Rules

The following requirements apply to both centers and homes.

Transportation

Child care centers or family child care homes providing transportation for children must meet all motor vehicle laws, including inspection, insurance, license, and restraint requirements. Children may never be left alone in a vehicle and child-staff ratio must be maintained.

Records

Centers and homes must keep accurate records such as children's attendance, immunizations, and emergency phone numbers. A record of monthly fire drills practiced with safe evacuation of children must also be maintained. A safe sleep policy must be developed and shared with parents if children younger than 12 months are in care.

Discipline

Each program must have a written policy on discipline, must discuss it with parents, and must give parents a copy when the child is enrolled. Changes in the discipline policy must be shared with parents in writing before going into effect. Corporal punishment (spanking, slapping, or other physical discipline) is prohibited in all centers and family child care homes. Religious-sponsored programs which notify the Division of Child Development and Early Education that corporal punishment is part of their religious training are exempt from that part of the law.

Parental Rights

- Parents have the right to enter a family child care home or center at any time while their child is present.
- Parents have the right to see the license displayed in a prominent place.
- Parents have the right to know how their child will be disciplined.

The laws and rules are developed to establish minimum requirements. Most parents would like more than minimum care. Child care resource and referral agencies can provide help in choosing quality care. Check the telephone directory or talk with a child care provider to see if there is a child care resource and referral agency in your community. For more information visit the Resources in Child Care website at: www.ncchildcare.net. For more information on the law and rules, contact the Division of Child Development and Early Education at 919-662-4499 or 1-800-859-0829, or visit our homepage at: <http://www.ncchildcare.net>.

Reviewing Files

A public file is maintained in the Division's main office in Raleigh for every center or family child care home. These files can be

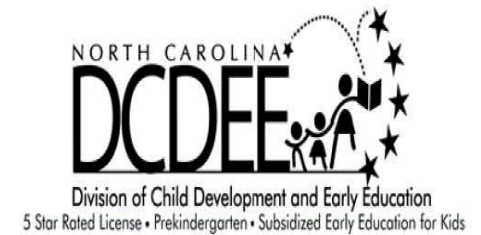
- viewed during work hours;
- requested via the Division's web site at www.ncchildcare.net; or,
- requested by contacting the Division at 1-800-859-0829.

How to Report a Problem

North Carolina law requires staff from the Division of Child Development and Early Education to investigate a licensed family child care home or child care center when there has been a complaint. Child care providers who violate the law or rules may be fined up to \$1,000 and may have their licenses suspended or revoked. If you believe that a child care provider fails to meet the requirements described in this pamphlet, or if you have questions, please call the Division of Child Development and Early Education at 919-662-4499 or 1-800-859-0829.

Child Abuse or Neglect

Abuse occurs when a parent or caregiver injures or allows another to injure a child physically or emotionally. Abuse may also occur when a parent or caregiver puts a child at risk of serious injury or allows another to put a child at risk of serious injury. Neglect occurs when a child does not receive proper care, supervision, or discipline, or when a child is abandoned. **North Carolina law requires any person who suspects child abuse or neglect to report the case to the county department of social services.** In addition, any person can call the Division of Child Development and Early Education at 919-662-4499 or 1-800-859-0829 and make a report of suspected child abuse or neglect in a child care operation. Reports can be made anonymously. A person cannot be held liable for a report made in good faith. The operator of the program must notify parents of children currently enrolled in writing of the substantiation of any abuse/neglect complaint or the issuance of any administrative action against the child care facility.



Summary of the North Carolina Child Care Law and Rules

Division of Child Development and Early Education

North Carolina Department of
Health and Human Services
319 Chapanoke Road
Raleigh, NC 27603

Revised November 2011

The North Carolina Department of Health and Human Services does not discriminate on the basis of race, color, national origin, sex, religion, age or disability in employment or provision of services.

Summary of the North Carolina Child Care Law and Rules (Cont.)

What Is Child Care?

The law defines child care as:

- three or more unrelated children under 13 years of age
- receiving care from a non-relative
- on a regular basis, of at least once a week
- for more than four hours per day but less than 24 hours.

It is only when all of these conditions exist that regulation is required. The North Carolina Department of Health and Human Services is responsible for regulating child care. This is done through the Division of Child Development and Early Education. The purpose of regulation is to protect the well-being of children while they are away from their parents. The law defining child care is in the North Carolina General Statutes, Article 7, Chapter 110.

The North Carolina Child Care Commission is responsible for adopting rules to carry out the law. Some counties and cities in North Carolina also have local zoning requirements for child care programs.

Star Rated Licenses

Centers and homes that are meeting the minimum licensing requirements will receive a one star license. Programs that choose to voluntarily meet higher standards can apply for a two through five star license. The number of stars a program earns is based upon the education levels their staff meet and the program standards met by the program.

Family Child Care Homes

A family child care home is licensed to care for five or fewer preschool age children, and can include three additional school-age children. This includes preschoolers living in the home, but the provider's own school-age children are not counted (Individuals caring for one or two children are exempt from being licensed). Licenses are issued to family child care home providers who meet the following requirements:

- Home providers must be 21 years old with at least a high school education or its equivalent, and mentally and emotionally capable of caring for children.
- He or she must undergo a criminal records background check initially, and every three years thereafter.
- All household members over age 15 who are present in family child care homes when children are in care must also undergo a criminal records background check initially, and every three years thereafter.

All family child care home providers must have current certification in CPR and first aid and complete an ITS-SIDS training (if caring for infants 0 -12 months) every three years. They also must complete a minimum number of training hours annually.

All family child care homes must meet basic health and safety standards. Providers must maintain verification of children's immunization and health status. They must provide developmentally appropriate toys and activities, as well as nutritious meals and snacks for the children in care. All children must participate in outdoor play at least one hour per day, if weather conditions permit.

Child Care Centers

Licensing as a center is required when six or more preschool children are cared for in a residence or when three or more children are in care in a building other than a residence. Religious-sponsored programs are exempt from some of the regulations described below if they choose to meet the standards of the Notice of Compliance rather than the Star Rated License. Programs that operate for less than four consecutive months, such as summer camps, are exempt from licensing. Child care centers may voluntarily meet higher standards and receive a license with a higher rating. Centers will be visited at least annually to make sure they are following the law and to receive technical assistance from child care consultants.

Licensed centers must meet requirements in the following areas.

Staff

The administrator of a child care center must be at least 21, and have at least a North Carolina Early Childhood Administration Credential or its equivalent. Lead teachers in a child care center must be at least 18 and have at least a North Carolina Early Childhood Credential or its equivalent. If administrators and lead teachers do not meet this requirement, they must begin credential coursework within six months of being hired. Staff younger than 18 years of age must work under the direct supervision of staff 21 years of age or older. All staff must complete a minimum number of training hours including ITS-SIDS training for any caregiver that works with infants 12 months of age or younger. At least one person on the premises must have CPR and First Aid training. All staff must also undergo a criminal records background check initially, and every three years thereafter.

Ratios

Ratios are the number of staff required to supervise a certain number of children. Group size is the maximum number of children in one group. Ratios and group sizes for licensure are shown below and must be posted in each classroom.

Age	Teacher : Child Ratio	Maximum Group Size
0-12 months	1:5	10
12-24 months	1:6	12
2 years old	1:10	20
3 years old	1:15	25
4 years old	1:20	25
School-age	1:25	25

Small centers in a residence that are licensed for six to twelve children may keep up to three additional school-age children, depending on the ages of the other children in care. When the group has children of different ages, staff-child ratios and group size must be met for the youngest child in the group.

Space and Equipment

To meet licensing requirements, there must be at least 25 square feet per child indoors and 75 square feet per child outdoors. Outdoor play space must be fenced. Indoor equipment must be clean, safe, well maintained, and developmentally appropriate. Outdoor equipment and furnishings must be child size, sturdy, and free of hazards that could injure children.

Curriculum

The Division of Child Development and Early Education does not promote or require any specific curriculum over another unless programs are using curriculum to get a quality point for the star-rated license. Child care programs choose the type of curriculum appropriate for the ages of the children enrolled. Activity plans must be available to parents and must show a balance of active and quiet, and indoor and outdoor activities. Rooms must be arranged to encourage children to explore and use materials on their own.

Health and Safety

Children must be immunized on schedule. Each licensed center must ensure the health and safety of children by sanitizing areas and equipment used by children. Meals and snacks must be nutritious, and children must have portions large enough to satisfy their hunger. Food must be offered at least once every four hours. Local health, building, and fire inspectors visit licensed programs to make sure standards are met. All children must be allowed to play outdoors each day (weather permitting) for at least an hour a day for preschool children and at least thirty minutes a day for children under two. They must have space and time provided for rest.

HUCKLEBERRY'S FRIENDS

PARENT HANDBOOK

Acknowledgments

Please complete one Acknowledgment Form for *each* child enrolled.

Child Name: _____ Date of Enrollment: _____

I/we acknowledge that a copy of the Parent Handbook of Huckleberry's Friends Child Care Center and Pre-School has been provided to my family. I understand that this handbook contains facility policies and procedures and also provides and explains relevant child care laws and regulations. Information provided in this handbook includes (but is not limited to):

- Discipline and Behavior Management Policy
- Safe Sleep Policy
- Center Operational Policies
- Summary of North Carolina Child Care Law

It is further acknowledged that I/we have received clarification of any items within the Parent Handbook which were not understood and thereby agree to abide by the policies set forth.

Information contained within the Parent Handbook is subject to change at any time. Huckleberry's Friends' administrators will notify all parents and other affected individuals/organizations (in writing) accordingly of such changes as they occur.

Parent Signature: _____ Date: _____

*A copy of this form will be returned to you for your records.
The original will be retained with the child's enrollment materials.*