

Big Steps  
EARLY LEARNING CENTER



# Parent Handbook

## **NON-DISCRIMINATORY STATEMENT**

Big Steps Early Learning Center (also called Big Steps, the Learning Center or the Center) is a non-discriminatory educational organization that accepts all children between the ages of six weeks and eight years, regardless of their race, color, sex, religion, or national origin.

## **MISSION STATEMENT**

Our mission is to provide high quality childcare and developmentally-appropriate learning experiences for children ages six weeks through eight years, with the active involvement of parents and guardians. The center accepts children regardless of race, gender, religion, or national origin.

## **PHILOSOPHY**

The center offers individualized and small group activities to meet the needs of children growing in an ever-changing world. Our staff offers a Creative Curriculum - based program of developmentally appropriate intellectual, physical, and social activities.

Each classroom is child oriented. Teachers guide learning through discovery and creativity. The Creative Curriculum approach helps children have respect for themselves, others, property, and the environment. We recognize children as active learners and encourage hand-on discovery geared to their ages and abilities. And we encourage children to become self-confident, enthusiastic, and independent.

The center accommodates children with Special needs. The staff works with families and other professionals to provide children with opportunities to learn self-reliance and independence.

### **Big Steps Organization**

#### **A: Administrative Personnel**

Owner – **Amie Teel**

Director – **Candace Adkins**

#### **B: Classrooms at Big Steps**

- |                           |                       |
|---------------------------|-----------------------|
| 1. Infant Class           | 6wks -12 months       |
| 2. Toddler Class          | 12 months - 18 months |
| 3. Tot Class              | 18 months – 2 ½ years |
| 4. Tike Class             | 2 ½ – 3.5 years       |
| 5. Pre-Kindergarten Class | 3.5 to 6 years        |

The center Owner or Director has final say on all issues that arise at Big Steps. In their absence, a qualified individual will be appointed to be in charge in the event that all admins are absent at the same time.

## **FAMILY INVOLVEMENT**

Center staff welcomes family presence and input. Here are some ways you can choose to participate:

Attend two parent /teachers conferences a year to help assist your child's progress, talents, needs, and future goals.

Visit the class and observe daily activities. If you would like to join us for lunch, just let staff know before 9:00 A.M. so we can arrange it with the kitchen staff.

Helping at home: Parents can cut name tags, letter signs, measure string, or put together activity kits for a class during an evening.

## **VISITORS TO OUR CENTER**

We have an open-door policy for all families. If an unknown visitor should stop by, they will be met by center staff. After

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their intentions are confirmed, the staff will proceed as directed.

## ENROLLMENT

The Center accepts children for full day care in the Infant, Toddler, Tot, Tike, and Pre-K programs, and before and after school for the School-Age program. Part-time (i.e., fewer than five days / week) is limited and available only by advance arrangements with the office.

Parents will receive a tour and an enrollment packet. An interview with the Owner or Director can be scheduled on request. Staff maintains a waiting list when a classroom is full; openings are filled in date order.

The enrollment packet includes necessary forms for school and health records, as required by state law. All forms must be returned prior to enrollment, along with a deposit equal to one week's tuition.

Staff encourages child orientation to the classroom before the first day of regular attendance. Here is a typical schedule.

- 1.) Visit for one hour with parent present.
- 2.) Visit for two hours with parent present part of the time.
- 3.) Morning visit through lunch without parent; child is picked up just before nap.

Orientation can be customized to meet the child's needs. See your teacher to arrange.

Children adjust to new environments, activities, and people at different rates. Most will be well-adjusted to the change within two months. Occasionally, a child may have difficulty adjusting to a childcare center-based program. Center-based programs are not always appropriate for all children at all stages of their development. If staff identifies a problem in this area, they will request a parent conference to examine the best strategies or alternatives for the child and family.

## HOURS AND DAYS OF OPERATION

The Center is open Monday through Friday, 6:45 A.M. to 6:00 P.M.

We are closed on these holidays: New Year's Day, Martin Luther King Day, Good Friday, Memorial Day, Independence Day, Labor Day, Thanksgiving Day and the following Friday, Christmas Eve, Christmas Day, and the day after Christmas.

The Center, whenever possible, stays open during inclement weather (e.g., snow). We do not automatically close when public schools are out; however, we may ask you to stay with your child for a few minutes as additional staff to arrive. School age children that are not normally scheduled to attend must obtain Admin permission to attend for the full day. Watch KOMU and KMIZ and Facebook for closing announcements.

## DAILY TIME SCHEDULE

Each classroom at Big Steps sets their own schedule. These schedules are tied to Creative Curriculum. They are also flexible to meet the needs of all children in the classroom. You will be given a schedule for your child's specific class during your tour of the facility. If you would like another one at any time, see the Owner, Director, or Assistant Director.

## PAYMENT SCHEDULE AND POLICY

**Fees are based on enrollment, including holidays, not attendance. A non-refundable deposit equal to one week's tuition is due at the time of application. The deposit will pay for the first week of enrollment. Also, non-refundable \$40 registration fee upon enrollment.**

**After 60 days of paid tuition of enrollment each family is given one week per year of vacation.** You need to give the office written notice of your intended vacation for billing purposes. If your child is gone for one week consecutively you will not be charged tuition for that week.

Tuition rates are as follows:

**0 - 23 months (full time only)**

**\$45.00 per day = \$225.00 per week.**

**2 years**

**Full time = \$39.00 per day = \$195 per week**

**3, 4, & 5 years**

**Full time = \$38 per day = \$190 per week**

**School-age:**

**Before & after school with transportation = \$21 per day/\$105 per week**

**Before OR after school care with transportation \$17 per day/\$85 per week**

**OR before and after school without transportation = \$17 per day/\$85 per week**

**Full day (more than 4 hours) = \$35.00 per day/\$175 per week**

Payments are in advance and may be made 4 ways:

\*Monthly, due by the 5th

\*Semi-monthly, due on the 1<sup>st</sup> & 15<sup>th</sup> of the month

\*Bi-weekly, due the first Monday in that two-week period for which care is provided

\*Weekly, due on Mondays

There is a \$15 late fee charged when payments are 3 days late. Enrollment may be terminated if payment is not paid in full by the end of the 5<sup>th</sup> day. All unpaid balances will be turned over to collection after 30 days of non-payment.

**INTEREST ON UNPAID BALANCES**

Client understands that Big Steps is not a chartered leading institution and cannot ethically fund CLIENT'S litigation. If CLIENT fails to pay undisputed charged for legal services within thirty (30) days, CLIENT agrees to pay Big Steps interest at the rate of one percent (1%) per month on an unpaid balance of fees remaining on the last day of each succeeding calendar month.

**COST OF COLLECTIONS**

CLIENT further agrees that should it become necessary for Big Steps to resort to a lawsuit to collect the undisputed and unpaid balance of any legal services provided under this agreement, CLIENT will pay all reasonable expenses of that suit to include a reasonable attorney's fee to proceed with the suit to collect fees.

**DFS SUBSIDY**

The Center accepts childcare subsidies (e.g., Division of Family Services). Payment policies above also pertain to co-payments for subsidized care. Sign in sheets MUST be completed daily to avoid non-payment by DFS. Parents are responsible for any difference in the amount paid to the center by DFS and our regular fees. Parents/guardians are responsible for keeping their child's authorization active. If the benefit is allowed to lapse, enrollment may be terminated.

**ARRIVAL AND DISMISSAL**

If you need help with separation in the morning, please let us know. Some parents prefer to help their child get involved in an activity before leaving. Others know that the longer they stay, the more difficult it is for their child to separate. Those parents usually prefer a kiss and hug good-bye, and then allow Big Steps staff to support their child while they walk out. Please do not "sneak out" or tell your children that you will be right back. The child needs to become accustomed to the parent/guardian saying goodbye, leaving, and then returning at the end of the day.

We require children to be at the center by 9:00 a.m. each day. We feel that the most educational part of our program

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occurs between the hours of 9:00 and 11:00 a.m. We also feel that is not fair to the child to come in at lunch or nap time and have no time to play. Children are at their best when they follow a consistent routine. We realize of course, that there may be times when the child can not be here by 9:00 (i.e. Dr. Appointments, etc.). We ask that you please call ahead and let us know that your child will be late.

If you need to pick up your child at an irregular time and need assistance in having him/her ready (hair combed, clothes changed, etc.) for a special event, please call before you come. We will try to prepare your child for any change in routine as sometimes this helps eliminate difficulties experienced with change.

### **LATE PICK-UP**

If your child is not picked up by closing time (6:00 p.m.) there will be a charge of \$1.00 for every minute that you are late picking up your child. We will begin calling parent's home and work numbers if the child/children are not picked up by 6:05. If we are unable to reach parents by phone, we will begin calling emergency contact numbers. If your child/children have not been picked up by 7:00 p.m., the police department and the Division of Family Services will be notified. Late pick up fees must be paid within one week to avoid any interruption of care.

### **EMERGENCY PROCEDURES WHEN PARENTS CANNOT BE REACHED**

In the case of an accident or an emergency, parents will be notified immediately. If parents can not be reached, we will contact the person(s) listed as emergency contacts on the enrollment form. Please keep the office informed of any changes in emergency contacts and/or phone numbers. These emergency numbers should be local numbers and should be kept current. You will be asked annually to update your child's emergency contact form.

### **HEALTH**

Big Steps Early Learning Center staff will be very cautious of symptoms which may indicate the onset of something contagious. If a child seems unusually irritable or fatigued, we may limit his/her activities.

We ask that parents be especially attuned to this issue. When dropping off your child in the morning, please supply us with any information that will help us in providing a healthy environment for all concerned. For instance, if your child did not sleep well the night before, seems cranky and tired, is starting to have a runny nose, etc., please let us know.

Children should **not** be brought to the center if any of the following symptoms have been exhibited during the previous twenty-four (24) hours, and have not been examined by a doctor:

1. Temperature above one hundred (100) degrees.
2. Any vomiting or diarrhea.
3. A rash.
4. A new cough.
5. Bloodshot/red, swollen eyes or eyelids, or discharge from the eyes.
6. An earache or discharge from the ear.
7. Drainage and sore throat.

**Children exhibiting any of the above symptoms will be sent home.**

Please notify the school immediately if your child has a communicable disease.

Examples include, but are not limited to, the following:

- |    |                      |     |                                  |
|----|----------------------|-----|----------------------------------|
| 1. | <b>Measles</b>       | 8.  | <b>Rashes (Unknown)</b>          |
| 2. | <b>Ringworm</b>      | 9.  | <b>Lice</b>                      |
| 3. | <b>Hepatitis</b>     | 10. | <b>Scabies</b>                   |
| 4. | <b>Scarlet Fever</b> | 11. | <b>Impetigo</b>                  |
| 5. | <b>Stomatitis</b>    | 12. | <b>Strep Throat</b>              |
| 6. | <b>Chicken Pox</b>   | 13. | <b>Conjunctivitis (Pink Eye)</b> |
| 7. | <b>Thrush</b>        | 14. | <b>Croup</b>                     |

**Children with any of the above illness will not be permitted to attend until they no longer contagious or after twenty-four (24) hours of antibiotic treatments. We reserve the right to request a statement from a physician stating that the child is no longer contagious.**

Medicine (prescription or non-prescription) can be administered to your child only if a dated authorization form is completed by the parent/guardian. Prescription medication must be in the original container and labeled with the child's name, instructions, and physician's name. Authorization forms are available at the center and must be updated weekly.

### **TORNADO AND FIRE DRILL**

The center has regularly scheduled fire and tornado drills. The escape routes are posted in every classroom and the teachers are coached on what to do in case of such an incident.

### **SNACKS AND MEALS**

Big Steps provides healthy, nutritious meals containing food from each of the main food groups. We follow USDA guidelines. Whole grain foods and little sugar will be used. Menus are posted on the parent board of each classroom.

Breakfast is served mid-morning, and a snack is provided mid-afternoon. Lunch is served between 11:00 a.m. and 12:00 p.m. If your child will be arriving later than usual, check with his/her teacher to see exactly when lunch will be served.

Because our center participates in the Child and Adult Care Food Program through USDA, we are held accountable for providing nutritious meals and snacks to the children in this center, so outside food and drinks are **not** allowed to be brought by parents for consumption while children are in attendance (unless it is for a party or your child's birthday). Food may not be left with your child at drop off or put into their cubby for consumption throughout the day. In the event of an audit from a USDA officer, outside food and drinks will disqualify the center from receiving benefits for that day's business.

The U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) prohibits discrimination against its customers, employees, and applicants for employment on the bases of race, color, national origin, age, disability, sex, gender identity, religion, reprisal and, where applicable, political beliefs, marital status, familial or parental status, sexual orientation, or if all or part of an individual's income is derived from any public assistance program, or protected genetic information in employment or in any program or activity conducted or funded by the Department. (Not all prohibited bases will apply to all programs and/or employment activities.)

If you wish to file a Civil Rights program complaint of discrimination, complete the USDA Program Discrimination Complaint Form, found online at [http://www.ascr.usda.gov/complaint\\_filing\\_cust.html](http://www.ascr.usda.gov/complaint_filing_cust.html), or at any USDA office, or call (866) 632-9992 to request the form. You may also write a letter containing all of the information requested in the form. Send your completed complaint form or letter to us by mail at U.S. Department of Agriculture, Director, Office of Adjudication, 1400 Independence Avenue, S.W., Washington, D.C. 20250-9410, by fax (202) 690-7442 or email at [program.intake@usda.gov](mailto:program.intake@usda.gov).

Individuals who are deaf, hard of hearing or have speech disabilities may contact USDA through the Federal Relay Service at (800) 877-8339; or (800) 845-6136 (Spanish).

Our center operates on a Feed on Demand policy for infants in our care. You have the choice to provide breastmilk or formula for feeding, and we also provide formula that your child may be fed. If you have elected to supply breastmilk or formula, but not enough has been provided for the day to satisfy USDA serving requirements (see below) or your child's hunger, then we will supplement with formula. We don't want to have hungry babies :-)

<b>Food Chart – Infants*</b>		<b>Birth through 3 months of age</b>	<b>4 through 7 months of age</b>	<b>8 through 11 months of age</b>
<b>Breakfast</b>	Iron-fortified Infant Formula <sup>1</sup> or Breastmilk <sup>2</sup>	4 to 6 fluid ounces	4 to 8 fluid ounces	6 to 8 fluid ounces
		4 to 6 fluid ounces <sup>3</sup>	4 to 8 fluid ounces <sup>3</sup>	6 to 8 fluid ounces <sup>3</sup>
	Iron-fortified Dry Infant Cereal		0 to 3 Tbsp (when ready) <sup>4</sup>	2 to 4 Tbsp.
	Fruit and/or Vegetable <sup>5</sup> (not juice)			1 to 4 Tbsp.
<b>Snack</b>	Iron-fortified Infant Formula <sup>1</sup> or Breastmilk <sup>2</sup> or Full Strength Fruit Juice (8 months+)	4 to 6 fluid ounces	4 to 6 fluid ounces	2 to 4 fluid ounces
				2 to 4 fluid ounces
	Whole grain or enriched Crusty bread or Cracker type products			0 to ½ slice (when ready) <sup>4</sup> 0 to 2 (when ready) <sup>4</sup>
<b>Lunch or Supper</b>	Iron-fortified Infant Formula <sup>1</sup> or Breastmilk <sup>2</sup>	4 to 6 fluid ounces	4 to 8 fluid ounces	6 to 8 fluid ounces
	Fruit and/or Vegetable (not juice) <sup>5</sup>		0 to 3 Tbsp (when ready) <sup>4</sup>	1 to 4 Tbsp.
	<b>One or more of the following:</b>			
	Iron-fortified Dry Infant Cereal		0 to 3 Tbsp (when ready) <sup>4</sup>	2 to 4 Tbsp.
	Meat or Poultry or Fish (8 months+) <sup>6</sup>			1 to 4 Tbsp.
	Egg Yolk			1 to 4 Tbsp.
	Cooked Dry Beans or Peas			1 to 4 Tbsp.
Cheese			½ to 2 ounces	
Cottage Cheese			1 to 4 ounces (volume)	
Cheese food or cheese spread			1 to 4 ounces (weight)	

\*Even though the infant meal pattern specifies breakfast, snack, lunch, and supper, these are just guidelines. Infants should be fed on demand and should not, in any way, be restricted to a rigid feeding schedule. Each infant should be fed according to his/her demands. In order for centers to claim CACFP meals, every infant enrolled in care must be served creditable meals documented daily on an age appropriate Individual Infant Meal Record (menu), and maintain an Infant Feeding Preference record.

<sup>1</sup>Meals containing iron-fortified infant formula provided by the infant's parent can be claimed for reimbursement. When age appropriate, all other food components must be provided by the center or child care home provider in order to claim for reimbursement.

<sup>2</sup>Meals containing only breastmilk can be claimed for reimbursement. All other food components (per the infant food chart) must be provided by the center or child care home provider.

<sup>3</sup>A serving of less than the minimum amount of breastmilk may be offered for the infant who regularly consumes smaller portions. Additional breastmilk must be offered if the infant is still hungry.

<sup>4</sup>Foods listed as "0" tablespoons let you know that the food is offered when developmentally appropriate for the infant and in conjunction with the parent designated Infant Feeding Preference form and medical authority recommendation.

<sup>5</sup>100% fruit juice does not fulfill the fruit/vegetable requirement at breakfast, lunch or supper; juice is only creditable when served for snack to infants 8 months and older.

<sup>6</sup>Hot dogs, corn dogs, chicken nuggets, yogurt, sausages and other foods are NOT creditable for infants. Commercial fish sticks and other commercial breaded or battered seafood products or canned, fresh or frozen fish with bones are NOT creditable for infants.

### NAPS

Nap time is from approximately 11:30 p.m. to 2:30 p.m. The length of time will depend on the child's age and needs. Rest time for non-nappers is from approximately 1:00 p.m. to 2:00 p.m. Children may bring a favorite blanket, pillow, or stuffed animal for nap or rest time. Please mark each nap time item with your child's name. Parents are responsible for the laundering of personal items weekly. Big Steps will wash cot sheets on a weekly basis.

### INFANT SAFE SLEEP POLICY

Date Adopted: December 1, 2015

Purpose: The purpose of the Safe Sleep Policy is to maintain a safe sleep environment that reduces the risk of sudden infant death syndrome (SIDS) and sudden unexpected infant deaths (SUIDS) in children less than one year of age. Missouri law (§ 210.223.1, RSMo.) requires all licensed childcare facilities that provide care for children less than one year of age to implement and maintain a written safe sleep policy in accordance with the most recent safe sleep recommendations of the American Academy of Pediatrics (AAP). Missouri childcare licensing rules require licensed childcare facilities to provide parent(s) and/or guardians(s) who have infants in care be provided a copy of the facility's safe sleep policy. Sudden infant death syndrome is the sudden death of an infant less than one year of age that cannot be explained after a thorough investigation has been conducted, including a complete autopsy, an examination of the death scene, and a review of the clinical history. Sudden unexpected infant death is the sudden and unexpected death of an infant less than one year of age in which the manner and cause of death are not immediately obvious prior to investigation. Causes of sudden unexpected infant death include, but are not limited to, metabolic disorders, hypothermia or hyperthermia, neglect or homicide, poisoning, and accidental suffocation. Childcare providers can maintain safer sleep environments for infants that help lower the chances of SIDS. Our goal is to take proactive steps to reduce the risk of SIDS in childcare and to work with parents to keep infants safer while they sleep.

To do so, this facility will practice the following safe sleep policy:

#### Safe Sleep Practices

1. Infants will always be placed on their backs to sleep. When, in the opinion of the infant's licensed health care provider, an infant requires alternative sleep positions or special sleeping arrangements, the provider must have on file at the facility written

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instructions, signed by the infant's licensed health care provider, detailing the alternative sleep positions or special sleeping arrangements. Caregivers will put the infant to sleep as specified in the written instructions.

2. When infants can easily turn from their stomachs to their backs and from their backs to their stomachs, they shall be initially placed on their backs, but shall be allowed to adopt whatever positions they prefer for sleep. The American Academy of Pediatrics recommends that infants are placed on their back to sleep, but when infants can easily turn over from their back to their stomach, they may adopt whatever position they prefer for sleep. We will follow this recommendation by the American Academy of Pediatrics.

3. Sleeping infants shall have a supervised nap period. The caregiver shall check on the infant frequently during napping or sleeping and shall remain in close proximity to the infant in order to hear and see them if they have difficulty during napping or when they awaken.

4. Steps will be taken to keep infants from overheating by regulating the room temperature, avoiding excess bedding, and not over-dressing or over-wrapping the infant. Infants should be dressed appropriately for the environment, with no more than one (1) layer more than an adult would wear to be comfortable in that environment.

5. All caregivers will receive in-person or online training on infant safe sleep based on AAP safe sleep recommendations. This training must be completed within 30 days of employment or volunteering and will be completed every three years.

### **Safe Sleep Environment**

1. Room temperature will be kept at no less than 68°F and no more than 85°F when measured two feet from the floor. Infants are supervised to ensure they are not overheated or chilled.

2. Infants' heads and face will not be covered during sleep. Infants' cribs will not have blankets or bedding hanging on the sides of the crib. We may use sleep clothing (i.e. sleep sack, sleepers) that is designed to keep an infant warm without the possible hazard of covering the head or face during sleep/nap time.

3. No blankets, loose bedding, comforters, pillows, bumper pads, or any object that can increase the risk of entrapment, suffocation or strangulation will be used in cribs, playpens or other sleeping equipment.

4. Toys and stuffed animals will be removed from the crib when the infant is sleeping. When indicated on the Infant and Toddler Feeding and Care Plan or with written parent consent, pacifiers will be allowed in infants' cribs while they sleep. The pacifier cannot have cords or attaching mechanisms.

5. Only an individually assigned safety-approved crib, portable crib, or playpen with a firm mattress and tight-fitting sheet will be used for infant napping or sleeping.

6. Only one infant may occupy a crib or playpen at one time.

7. Sitting devices such as car safety seats, strollers, swings, infant carriers, infant slings, and other sitting devices will not be used for sleep/nap time. Infants who fall asleep anywhere other than a crib, portable crib, or playpen must be placed in the crib or playpen for the remainder of their sleep or nap time.

8. No person shall smoke or otherwise use tobacco products in any area of the childcare facility during the period of time when children cared for under the license are present.

9. Home monitors or commercial devices marketed to reduce the risk of Sudden Infant Death Syndrome (SIDS) shall not be used in place of supervision while children are napping and sleeping.

10. All parents/guardians of infants shall be informed of the facility's written Safe Sleep Policy at enrollment.

11. To promote healthy development, infants who are awake will be given supervised "tummy time" for exercise and for play.

12. The lighting of the room will be conducive to allow proper supervision of infants while in their cribs.

13. Noise machines will be prohibited as to not interfere with caregiver's ability to hear an infant in distress.

### **GUIDANCE/DISCIPLINE POLICY**

The staff of Big Steps Early Learning Center respects each child's individuality; we encourage independence and strive to always be positive and rewarding of desirable behavior. We set clear limits and expectations and make these known to the children. We work to model appropriate interactions with others and provide cues to the children to remind them of what is expected.

When it is appropriate, undesirable behavior is ignored, usually causing the child to see that attention will not be gained from the action. When redirection is required, we will be consistent, reasonable, and realistic. The child will be told why the behavior is unacceptable. We will be honest about our feelings, letting the child know how his/her behavior is making us and others feel. Teachers use a Positive Discipline approach to handle situations. Children are asked to use calming and communication techniques to defuse situations, or to handle an unpleasant situation with friends. These techniques involve giving them guidance to make safer/kinder choices when interacting in the classroom or on the playground.



Sitting in the "Safe Spot," will be used only when a child has hurt another child or a piece of equipment or is emotionally out of control. If needed, the child will be separated from the group, but visible to staff. The length of time for sitting in the "safe spot" equals one minute for each year in the child's age. The child will be told exactly why he/she is in time out and this time will be viewed as a chance for the child to regain control.

## **AGGRESSION**

We cannot allow any child to hurt other children, staff members, or themselves. When aggressive behavior occurs, the parent will be notified, and a mandatory conference will be scheduled.

The parent will be expected to begin immediate cooperative effort with the staff to help the child learn appropriate behavior. Parental cooperation and support are an essential element in helping the child. Lack of timely action will result in dismissal from the center. In the event of a serious aggressive incident to children, staff or equipment/materials, the parent will be called and required to pick up the child. The Director will decide if the child may return.

Consistent disruptive or inappropriate behavior is harmful for all the children and is also detrimental to the quality of care given. Therefore, teachers will schedule a conference concerning behaviors. The teachers and parent will openly discuss the problems, the causes, and the center's ability to work with the behaviors that are causing concern.

Parents and teachers will agree on a consistent strategy for developing appropriate behavior. Parental cooperation/support is expected and will be necessary if the child is to remain enrolled at the center. The director will make the final decision of the center's ability to provide care in the event of behavior disorders or aggression.

## **SUPERHERO PLAY AND WARPLAY**

Today, children see aggression in many forms and tend to display these feelings in play. At Big Steps, we feel that intervention and redirection become necessary when superhero play or warplay begins to get out of hand. To aid in our effort to foster productive and meaningful play, and for reasons of safety we have established the following guidelines:

1. No toy guns at school.
2. Moldable toys such as Legos may not be made into guns or be used to "shoot" someone.
3. Children are not allowed to play superhero "fighting" games while at school. They will be redirected to other activities.

## **BITING**

Biting is a frustrating and painful behavior for parents and caregivers to handle. Between the ages of one (1) and two (2) (sometimes longer) children use the mouth to explore and learn about the environment. They also have very limited verbal skills during this stage. As a result, biting may occur for the following reasons: Exploration, expressing emotions, and attention. Some children may not bite at all and others may be frequent and persistent biters.

For the protection of all the children, biting behavior will be handled with the following procedure.

1. The child who is bitten will be comforted and given immediate first aid.
2. The child who bites will be told that biting is not acceptable and be removed from the group for an amount of time appropriate for his/her age group.
3. When a child is bitten, an accident and/or incident report will be prepared immediately.
4. The parent of the child who was bitten will be informed.
5. The identity of children involved in the incident will remain confidential.
6. When biting occurs, the childcare staff will look for reasons behind incidents and time patterns. The staff will decide if changes in the environment, schedule, etc. will help alleviate the behavior.
7. In cases of repeated biting, these measures will be followed within the classroom.
  - a. The child will be praised and encouraged when appropriate behavior and communication is used with others.
  - b. Every effort will be made to separate the children as a measure to avoid close proximity, biting, or

- repeated biting of the same child.
- c. Teachers and parents will work together to form a consistent plan for working with the children.
  - d. If a child bites 3 times within one day, a parent will be notified to come pick the child up. They may return the next day to the facility. If biting becomes an issue that seems to not be resolved by the above actions over a reasonable period, the child may be dismissed from the program at the Owner's discretion.

### **TOILET TRAINING**

Children do not have to be toilet trained to be admitted. Our policy is to work with parents closely to determine when a child is developmentally ready to begin toilet training. Then, we will discuss which toilet-training procedure is most comfortable for all concerned, especially the child. The most important aspect is to keep the child's experience at home and at school as similar as possible.

A child who is not toilet trained should wear disposable or cloth diapers. Parents are responsible for providing the center with a supply of diapers and wipes for their child as needed. You should provide an adequate supply of diapers each day. You need to ensure that your child has enough extra underwear, and full outfits to make it through the day during this process as they can have several accidents in a day's attendance. In addition, you will need to supply your child's teacher with a latching pail for storage of wet or soiled cloth diapers if applicable.

If your child does not have an adequate number of diapers for their time in attendance during the day, parents will be charged \$1 per diaper used that BSELC provides.

### **CLOTHING**

Every child should have at least one complete change of play clothes at school, including socks and underwear. Each item of clothing should be marked with a permanent marker with your child's first and last name. Big Steps staff plan activities such as painting, food preparation, etc. Please send your child in play clothes that they can get dirty. If your child still has frequent accidents, you will need to provide an adequate supply of clothing.

The following additional seasonal items are requested:

**SUMMER:** A swimsuit, water shoes, and tennis shoes for outside play.

**WINTER:** Boots, hats, mittens, and snow pants are essential for cold weather. To maintain a healthy balance in a child's daily schedule, outside time is a must. Please keep this in mind when you are helping your child choose his/her clothes and outer garments for the day. It is much better to wear too many outer garments than too few.

### **OUTSIDE PLAY GUIDELINES**

Gross motor activity is a necessity in a childcare setting. We will take the children outside for at least 30 minutes each day as required by licensing. The following are the temperature guidelines that we follow, so you will need to make sure that your child has appropriate clothes, outerwear to spend time outside.

#### Cold Weather guidelines (this is the temperature with wind chill):

Infants: 60 degrees or above

Toddler/Tots: 50 degrees or above

Tikes: 40 degrees or above

Pre-K: 32 degrees or above (when temperatures are at freezing, they may only go out for 10-15 minutes)

#### Hot Weather guidelines (this is the temperature with heat index):

Infants: 75 and below

Toddler/Tots: 80 and below

Tikes: 85 and below

### **TOYS FROM HOME**

Toys should not be brought to Big Steps. A toy is a personal item that is not easily shared with other. Loss, breakage, and hurt feelings are often the result. If your child has Show-n-Tell scheduled, they may bring an item from home to share with the group, but it must fit into their cubby space and needs to be taken home at the end of the day.

### **VIDEOS/TELEVISION**

Television and videos are kept to a minimum to provide more time for creativity, literature, music, etc. We do offer movies during special times such as holiday parties, rewards for good behaviors in the classroom, or times that we can't go outside in inclement weather. Our Pre-K classroom does watch short videos that correlate with our weekly Scholastic lessons.

### **SPECIAL EVENTS**

A birthday is a special event for a young child. If you plan to bring treats, please make prior arrangements with the teachers. Parents are encouraged to attend and bring treats. This will avoid hurt feelings on the part of those children who are not invited.

### **GRIEVANCE PROCEDURE**

Parents with concerns regarding classroom issues should contact the teacher by school phone or a note to set up a time to discuss the concerns. The parent or the teacher may request that an Admin staff be involved in the meeting to discuss the concerns.

Please inform the Directors if you have concerns about childcare policies, administration, physical environment, or safety. The Directors will arrange a time to meet with you to discuss the issue. If the concern is a safety issue, please inform the Director immediately.

### **DISMISSAL POLICY**

Big Steps Early Learning Center will not accept a child for care in the following circumstances:

1. Non-payment of fees/late charges.
2. Child or parent aggression causing injury to children, staff, guests, or volunteers.
3. Destruction of materials or facilities.
4. Consistent behavior that is harmful to the emotional and developmental welfare of the children, staff or visitors within the Center.
5. Failure of parent/guardian to comply with policies of Big Steps Early Learning Center and the licensing regulations of Missouri Division of Family Services (DFS).
6. Routinely late picking up your child
7. Lack of providing the school with necessary items: diapers/wipes, updated paperwork, DFS sign in/out sheets, extra clothes, etc.
8. Our inability to meet the child's needs
9. Serious illness of the child

### **WITHDRAWING FROM THE PROGRAM**

Big Steps requires a two-week written notice be given prior to your child leaving the program. If you do not give two weeks written notice about your child's leaving, two-week's tuition will be assessed to your final bill.

**Acknowledgement of Big Step's Policies: Sign and return this form to the office with other completed enrollment paperwork.**

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

I have received and read BSEL's parent handbook. I understand and agree to follow all policies and procedures outlined in the parent handbook.

\_\_\_\_\_  
Parent Signature

\_\_\_\_\_  
Parent Signature