



Kidz Fortress Childcare Learning Center

FAMILY HANDBOOK



WELCOME

Dear Family,

We are excited to partner with you in your child's journey of discovering the joy of learning. We take our role in your child's development very seriously, but we also love to make learning fun! Thank you for allowing us to plan an integral role in your child's education. We are embarking on a wonderful, exciting journey together.

We believe learning should be fun and that children learn best through hands-on. When children are physically and mentally engaged, they absorb and retain information, and enjoy the learning process. We'll work together with your child and you to make learning fun.

Thank you for choosing **Kidz Fortress Childcare Learning Center** We look forward to providing your child with a caring and enriching environment.

Sincerely,

Jessica Holmes

Director

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Kidz Fortress Childcare Learning Center

TABLE OF CONTENTS

ABOUT US	1
Philosophy.....	1
Mission.....	1
Certification.....	1
Definition of Family.....	2
Hours of Operation.....	2
Holidays.....	2
Admission & Enrollment.....	2
Inclusion.....	2
Non-Discrimination.....	2
Family Activities.....	3
Confidentiality.....	3
Staff Qualifications.....	3
Child to Staff Ratios.....	3
Communication & Family Partnership.....	4
Open Door Policy.....	4
Publicity.....	5
CURRICULA & LEARNING	5
Learning Environment.....	5
Curricula & Assessment.....	5
Developmental Screening.....	5
Outings and Field Trips.....	5
Transitions.....	6
Transition from home to center.....	6
Transition between learning programs.....	6
Transition to elementary school.....	6
Transition for before/after school care.....	6
Electronic Media.....	6
Multiculturalism.....	6
Celebrations.....	7
Rest Time.....	7
Toilet Training.....	7
GUIDANCE	7
General Procedure.....	7
Challenging Behavior.....	8
Physical Restraint.....	8
Notification of Behavioral Issues to Families.....	8
TUITION AND FEES	9
Payment.....	9
Late Payment Charges.....	9
Returned Checks/Rejected Transaction Charges.....	9
Late Pick-up Fees.....	9
Special Activity Fees.....	9
Additional Fees/ Credits.....	9
ATTENDANCE & WITHDRAWAL	10
Absence.....	10
Vacation.....	10
Withdrawal.....	10
Transfer of Records.....	10
Closing Due to Extreme Weather.....	10
DROP-OFF AND PICK-UP	11
General Procedure.....	11
Cell Phone Usage.....	11

Authorized & Unauthorized Pick-up.....	11
Right to Refuse Child Release.....	11
PERSONAL BELONGINGS.....	11
What to Bring.....	11
Cubbies.....	12
Lost & Found.....	12
Toys from Home.....	12
NUTRITION.....	12
Foods Brought from Home.....	12
Food Prepared for or at the Center.....	13
Food Allergies.....	13
Meal Time.....	13
Infant Feedings.....	13
Children 24 Months and Older.....	14
School Aged Participants.....	14
HEALTH.....	14
Immunizations.....	14
Physicals.....	14
Illness.....	14
Allergy Prevention.....	15
Medications.....	16
Communicable Diseases.....	16
SAFETY.....	17
Clothing.....	17
Extreme Weather and Outdoor Play.....	17
Communal Water-Play.....	17
Injuries.....	17
Biting.....	17
Respectful Behavior.....	18
Smoking.....	18
Prohibited Substances.....	18
Dangerous Weapons.....	18
Child Custody.....	18
Suspected Child Abuse.....	18
EMERGENCIES.....	19
Lost or Missing Child.....	19
Fire Safety.....	19
Emergency Transportation.....	19
CENTER POLICIES.....	19
FAMILY ACTIVITIES.....	ERROR! BOOKMARK NOT DEFINED.

ABOUT US

Philosophy

We believe.....

- That children are precious and must receive care from adults who are capable and caring, whose values enable them to be excellent role models.
- That children should experience numerous positive learning milestones, leading to an increased sense of competence and independence.
- That children's play is extremely vital to healthy physical development, acceptable social skills, and cognitive growth.
- That teachers, drawing upon their training and experience, must create an appropriate educational environment which carefully guides children from one developmental, and cognitive, level to another.
- That parents contribute to, and enhance the quality of care offered at Kidz Fortress Childcare Learning Center

We welcomes those of diverse faiths, ethnic origins, and race.

Mission

At Kidz Fortress Childcare Learning Center children are gently encouraged to discover their individual strengths and unique talents. We believe that each child possesses a marvelous capacity to learn. Learning is best accomplished in a place that is emotionally secure, physically safe and fun. We aim to be the catalyst for your child's lifelong learning. Through age-appropriate, fun-filled programs, we will help your little ones become competent and well-rounded individuals in the future.

Certification

State Licensed

Quality Rated 2 Star

Definition of Family

In this handbook we refer to family as a parent, legal guardian, sponsor or anyone else who provides for the well-being, best-interest and responsibility of the child in our care.

Hours of Operation

Child care services are provided from 5:30 AM to 6:30 PM Monday through Friday.

School age care will also be conducted at these times.

Holidays

We are closed for certain holidays: New Year's (Closings Vary) Good Friday, Richmond County School System Spring Break Week we're closed Wednesday, Thursday & Friday, Memorial Day, Independence Day (Closings Vary) Labor Day, Veterans Day, Thanksgiving Eve, Thanksgiving Day, & the day after Thanksgiving, Christmas (Closings Vary)

Holiday Closings are available 4 weeks prior to closings.

Admission & Enrollment

All admission and enrollment forms must be completed and enrollment fee and first tuition payment paid prior to your child's first day of attendance.

An enrollment fee of \$65.00 is due at the time of enrollment. This fee is non-refundable.

Based on the availability and openings, our facility admits children from 6 weeks to 12 years of age.

Children are admitted without regard to race culture, sex, religion, national origin, or disability. We do not discriminate on the basis of special needs as long as a safe, supportive environment can be provided.

Inclusion

Kidz Fortress Childcare Learning Center believes that children of all ability levels are entitled to the same opportunities for participation, acceptance and belonging in child care. We will make every reasonable accommodation to encourage full and active participation of all children in our program based on his/her individual capabilities and needs.

Non-Discrimination

At **Kidz Fortress Childcare Learning Center** equal educational opportunities are available for all children, without regard to race, color, creed, national origin, gender, age, ethnicity, religion, disability, or parent/provider political beliefs, marital status, sexual orientation or special needs, or any other consideration made unlawful by federal, state or local laws. Educational programs are designed to meet the varying needs of all students.

Family Activities

Each family is a child's first teacher. We value families as partners in the growth and development of children in our program. We encourage parents and other family members to be involved in the program, visit children's classrooms, participate in events, and provide feedback

on the program. We offer a variety of ways in which families can participate in helping us establish and reach our program goals.

Please see the list of Family Activities at the end of this booklet.

Confidentiality

Unless we receive your written consent, information regarding your child will not be released with the exception of that required by our regulatory and partnering agencies. All records concerning children at our program are confidential.

Staff Qualifications

Our Teachers are hired in compliance with the state requirements and qualifications as a base minimum. Typical staff certifications are as follows:

Position Title	Education/Certification	Experience
Teacher	Child Development Associate Credential or equivalent	1 year
Teacher Assistant/Aide	High School Diploma or equivalent	1 year

Caregivers participate in orientation and ongoing training in the areas of child growth and development, healthy and safe environments, developmentally appropriate practices, guidance, family relationships, cultural and individual diversity, and professionalism.

We strongly discourage families from entering into employment arrangements with staff (i.e. babysitting). Any arrangement between families and our caregivers outside the programs and services we offer is a private matter, not connected or sanctioned by **Kidz Fortress Childcare Learning Center**

Child to Staff Ratios

Children are supervised at all times. All caregivers receive scheduled breaks which reduce fatigue and help to ensure alertness.

We maintain the following standards for child to staff ratios:

Age	Child to Staff	Maximum Group Size
≤ 12 months	<u>6 to 1</u>	<u>12</u>
13-23 months	<u>8 to 1</u>	<u>16</u>
24 -35 months	<u>10 to 1</u>	<u>16</u>
3 year-olds	<u>15 to 1</u>	<u>15</u>
4 year-olds	<u>18 to 1</u>	<u>22</u>
5 year-olds	<u>20 to 1</u>	<u>22</u>
6 to 12 year olds	<u>25 to 1</u>	<u>28</u>

Communication & Family Partnership

Daily Communications. Daily notes from center staff will keep you informed about your child's activities and experiences at the center. Notes will be placed into your child's cubby at the end of the day.

Bulletin Boards. Located throughout the center, bulletin boards provide center news, upcoming events, faculty changes, holiday closing dates, announcements, etc.

Newsletters. [Click to insert Weekly, Monthly, Quarterly, etc.] Newsletters provide center news, events, announcements, etc. These newsletters are available at the sign-in/sign-out desk for your taking.

Email. We encourage you to provide an email address that you use regularly so that we may send you announcements, event invitations, newsletters and general updates.

Parent Resource Room. Our parent resource room provides a learning environment for parents to share opinions, ideas and experiences and increase their understanding of learning and development.

Family Visits. Family participation is encouraged. Visit our classrooms, volunteer, come along on a field trip, or eat a meal with your child. Signing in is required for the safety and protection of our children. Each visitor must wear a visitor's badge while on premises and sign-out upon leaving.

Family Night. Family nights are scheduled on a regular basis. These nights include snacks, drinks and fun filled age-appropriate activities for families. Family Nights allow families and children time to share, learn, and have fun. Families have an opportunity to be a part of their child's learning experience and connect with other families.

Conferences. Family & teacher conferences occur twice a year. During these conferences, we will discuss your child's strengths, likes and dislikes, and styles of learning. We will work together to set goals for your child's growth and development. You may request additional conferences regarding your child's progress at any time. We encourage you to communicate any concerns.

Open Door Policy

We are delighted to have family members participate in our program. Parents/Guardians are welcome to visit the program any time during regular program hours. The infant room welcomes parents/guardians to nurse or feed their infants.

Open Door Policy does not mean the doors will be unlocked. For the safety and protection of the children, external doors will be kept locked at all times.

Our team will always do their best to speak with parents/guardians. Since staff days are devoted to caring for children, it is usually not feasible to have a long discussion during regular program hours. If a situation requires a longer discussion, kindly arrange for an appointment.

Publicity

Occasionally, photos will be taken of the children at the center for use within the center or on our website. Written permission will be obtained prior to use of photographs.

Unless the family indicates that they want their child to participate, we will not use pictures and names of children for publicity.

CURRICULA & LEARNING

Learning Environment

We provide a rich learning environment with curricula that are developmentally appropriate to the specific ages in each classroom. We have a flexible day routine that allows children to advance at their own pace. We strongly believe that learning happens through play. Learning and exploring are hands-on and are facilitated through interest areas. Our program is designed to enhance children's development in the following areas: creativity, self-expression, decision-making, problem-solving, responsibility, independence, and reasoning. We encourage openness to that which is different from us, and the ability to work and play with others.

Curricula & Assessment

Kidz Fortress Childcare Learning Center uses the High Scope and Creative curriculum. As part of this curriculum, we gather information about each child's developmental abilities and evaluate progress so we can modify and adjust what we are doing in our classroom so as to deliver the best individualized instruction for each child. This evaluation is communicated to families periodically during the school year using various formal and informal tools, forms, and resources.

For information about your child's day, please see copies of daily schedules and lessons plans posted in each classroom.

Developmental Screening

Kidz Fortress Childcare Learning Center uses Annual Screenings to coincide with curriculum-based assessment(s), we monitor each child's achievement of developmental milestones, share observations with parents/guardians, and provide resource information as needed for further screenings, evaluations, and early intervention and treatment. The developmental screening process is a collaborative one, involving parents/guardians and done in conjunction with the child's primary care provider and health, education, and early intervention consultants. Developmental screening is conducted with written consent from the child's parent/guardian(s).

Outings and Field Trips

Weather permitting; we conduct 60 minutes of supervised outdoor play a day for all children. Children are accounted for at all times.

From time to time, there will be supervised field trips, for ages 3 years and up and we encourage you to join your child on the trip. *Permission Slips* for each trip must be signed by the child's family.

For field trips, please dress your child appropriately for the season. Walking shoes are a must. Sandals and flip-flops are not appropriate for walking and make it difficult for your child.

The safety of children and staff will be guarded in all activities of child care programs. Proper restraint systems (seat belts) and the correct use of them are critically important during travel to/from the child care program as well as during field trips.

Transitions

Your child's transition in child care should be a positive and exciting learning adventure. We will work with you and your child to ensure the smoothest possible transition occurs as new routines and new people are introduced.

Transition from home to center

Prior to your child's first day, you will have an opportunity to tour the center, meet with your child's peers and teachers, and communicate any anticipated concerns. At this time please share the best communication methods that the teacher may use to reach you.

Transition between learning programs

Children are transitioned to the next program based on age, developmental readiness, state licensing requirements, and space availability. During the transition, current and future teachers will meet with you to propose a plan to introduce your child into the new program.

Transition to elementary school

Transition activities such as a field trip to a local elementary school, creating a mural of special friends and special times at our center will be part of your child's education at our center. We will provide you with information on local schools, what to expect, and ideas on how to talk to your child about going to elementary school.

Transition for before/after school care

Children who are of school age may continue with before/after school care at our center. The center will provide staff to ensure that your child arrives at the bus stop for pick up (before school) and drop off (after school) in a timely manner. The Supplemental Enrollment Form must be completed and on file with the center in order to be eligible for this service.

Electronic Media

Our normal daily routine does not include electronic media (television/TV, video, DVD) viewing and computer use but from time-to-time, we may use a television show without advertisements as a teaching aid and discussion stimulator. All Electronic Media will be screened prior to use and will consist of non-violent and high-quality educational material. Our focus is to provide your child a positive experience with increased understanding of the world. Electronic Media will be offered only as a free choice, used to meet a developmental goal, and limited to no more than 60 minutes per week per child.

Georgia Rules prohibit any screen time for children under two. This includes TV, videos and computers.

Multiculturalism

Multiculturalism is vital for all children because it sets social goals and promotes respect for all people and the environment we inhabit. We utilize books, music, games, and a wide range of activities as aids to teach our children respect for our world and the diversity of life upon it.

Celebrations

Our holiday policy encourages an enhanced understanding of and respect for different cultures and beliefs of children, families, staff and community.

Holidays

We acknowledge:

- Different Families celebrate different holidays
- Families may celebrate the same holiday in different ways
- Not everyone celebrates every holiday
- What your family does is valued

Birthdays: The program will provide cake for the class at once for each birthday month

Rest Time

Infants sleep according to their own schedule and are put to sleep on their backs. Caregivers/teachers directly observe infants by sight and sound at all times.

After lunch, all children less than 5 years of age, participate in a quiet rest time. Children are not required to sleep and may be given quiet activities.

School age children, although not required, shall be provided an opportunity for a regular rest period if the child desires. For children who do not want to rest, a space and time for quiet play will be made available.

Teachers are trained on SIDS, all infants are placed in a supine position (wholly on the back) for every sleep until the child reaches one year of age to reduce the risk of SIDS

Toilet Training

The most important factor in making the toilet learning experience successful and as low-stress as possible is a family/teacher partnership that supports the child. Research indicates that children cannot successfully learn how to use the toilet until they are physically, psychologically, and emotionally ready. Many pediatricians say that most children under 24 months of age are not physically capable of regulating bladder and bowel muscles. Most positive toilet training occurs only after children show signs of physical control or awareness of their bodily functions and when they demonstrate an interest or curiosity in the process. We are committed to working with you to make sure that toilet learning is carried out in a manner that is consistent with your child's physical and emotional abilities and your family's concerns.

GUIDANCE

General Procedure

Kidz Fortress Childcare Learning Center is committed to each student's success in learning within a caring, responsive, and safe environment that is free of discrimination, violence, and bullying. Our center works to ensure that all students have the opportunity and support to develop to their fullest potential and share a personal and meaningful bond with people in the school community.

Thoughtful direction and planning ahead are used to prevent problems and encourage appropriate behavior. Communicating consistent, clear rules and involving children in problem solving help children develop their ability to become self-disciplined. We encourage children to

be fair, to be respectful of other people, of property, and to learn to understand the results of their actions.

Discipline Policy

We have created a discipline policy that reflects our philosophy of positive guidance with children. A copy of the discipline policy is included in your enrollment package for you to review and sign.

Challenging Behavior / Behavior Expectations

Children are guided to treat each other and adults with self-control and kindness.

Each student at **Kidz Fortress Childcare Learning Center** has a right to:

- Learn in a safe and friendly place
- Be treated with respect
- Receive the help and support of caring adults
- Each student is expected to be safe, be respectful, and be responsible

When a child becomes verbally or physically aggressive, we intervene immediately to protect all of the children. Our usual approach to helping children with challenging behaviors is to show them how to solve problems using appropriate interactions. When discipline is necessary, it is clear, consistent and understandable to the child. We maintain a zero tolerance to bullying. If you have any concerns about this at any time, please report it to the Director of the Center.

Physical Restraint

Physical restraint is not used or permitted for discipline. There are rare instances when we need to ensure a child's safety or that of others and we may restrain a child by gently holding her or him only for as long as is necessary for control of the situation.

Notification of Behavioral Issues to Families

If a child's behavior/circumstance is of concern, communication will begin with the parents as the first step to understanding the child's individual needs and challenges. We will work together to evaluate these needs in the context of our program.

On rare occasions, a child's behavior may warrant the need to find a more suitable setting for care. Examples of such instances include:

- A child appears to be a danger to others.
- Continued care could be harmful to, or not in the best interest of the child as determined by a medical, psychological, or social service personnel.
- Undue burden on our resources and finances for the child's accommodations for success and participation.

TUITION AND FEES

Payment

Payment is always due in advance with no deduction for any absences, holidays, or closures due to inclement weather, power outages, or other situations beyond our control. Payment is due Weekly by 6:30pm AM on Monday, as outlined in the *Enrollment Agreement*.

A non-refundable registration fee of \$65.00 is due annually on child anniversary date this fee will not be pro-rated.

Late Payment Charges

Late payments can pose serious problems for our programs. Therefore we have put procedures in place to reduce their impact.

If payment is not received on the day that it is due, a late fee of \$15.00 will be added to your next tuition payment for each Monday that it is late. If your account has not been paid in full within 10 business days, your child may be discharged from the program.

Any payments made will be applied to the oldest charges and late fees may still apply if the account is not paid in full by the next tuition due date.

If payment is more than 15 business days past due, we may attempt to recover payment in small claims court and/or your account may be sent to a 3rd party collections agency. You will be responsible for all expenses associated with these actions including all court and attorney fees.

Returned Checks/Rejected Transaction Charges

All returned checks or rejected ACH (automatic debits) or credit card transactions will be charged a fee of \$30.00. This charge may be collected electronically. One more returned check or rejected transactions will result in your account being placed on "cash only" status.

Late Pick-up Fees

Late pick-up is not a normal program option and will only be considered as an exceptional occurrence. Late fees of \$3.00 per minute will be assessed beginning at 6:31 PM and will be due upon arrival.

Special Activity Fees

From time-to-time there will be additional fees associated with special activities or field trips. These fees are due prior to the event, activity or trip.

Additional Fees/ Credits

- **Vacation** - to retain your child's spot during vacation, 50% of your regular tuition is due. Vacation days can be used if written notice is given in advance for the days the child will not be in attendance. Tuition must be paid prior to going on vacation. These fees are non-refundable if you choose not to return.
- A non-refundable enrollment/ registration fee of \$65.00 is due annually on child's anniversary .

Credits & No Credits

-
- **Credit will be given for Excused Absences** - if your child is hospitalized, absent due to a contagious disease, or absent at the request of the child's doctor, the absence is considered excused. A written doctor's note is required to receive a credit.
 - **Credit will not be given for Sick Days** – there are no credits for sick days. Sick days are considered in determining tuition and are not refundable.
 - **Credit will be given for Inclement Weather** - if we do not open due to inclement weather on a day that your child is scheduled to attend, your account will be credited for that day.

ATTENDANCE & WITHDRAWAL

Absence

If your child is going to be absent or arrive after 10:00am AM, please call us at (706)798-1072. We will be concerned about your child if we do not hear from you.

Arrival after 10:00am requires a medical excuse upon arrival

If a school age child will not be attending before or after school care, please notify us at (706)798-1072.

Vacation

[A] Vacation days only apply if your child is normally scheduled to attend on those days. Each child is given 5 vacation days each calendar year.

or

[B] While we recognize the value of family vacations, the center does not provide credit for vacation days.

Withdrawal

A written notice, 2 weeks in advance, is required by the center when a child is being withdrawn. Failure to notify will result in owing 2 weeks tuition.

Transfer of Records

Whether transitioning to the next program setting or to a new classroom, your child's records will be transferred internally.

If your child is transitioning to a new school, a written request from you with instructions to where the records should be sent is required.

Closing Due to Extreme Weather

Should severe weather or other conditions (i.e., snow, storms, floods, tornadoes, hurricanes, earthquakes, blizzards, loss of power, loss of water) prevent us from opening on time or at all, notification to the families will be announced on local news station Wrdw and Wjbf, program's Facebook and communicator "REMIND"

If it becomes necessary to close early, we will contact you or your emergency contacts as soon as possible. Your child's early pick-up is your responsibility to arrange.

DROP-OFF AND PICK-UP

General Procedure

We open at 5:30 AM. Please do not drop-off your child prior to the opening. Parents are expected to accompany their children and sign them in.

We close at 6:30 PM. Please allow enough time to arrive, sign your child out, and leave by closing time.

Cell Phone Usage

The times you spend in the center dropping off and picking up your child are the primary windows of time we have to communicate with you about your child. In order to make the best use of these opportunities, as well as to be attentive to your child and other children, we ask that you NOT use your cell phone at any time while visiting the center.

Authorized & Unauthorized Pick-up

Your child will only be released to you or those persons you have listed as Emergency and Release Contacts. If you want a person who is not identified as an Emergency and Release Contact to pick-up your child, you must notify us in advance, in writing. Your child will not be released without prior written authorization. The person picking up your child will be required to show a picture ID as verification. Please notify your pick-up person of our policy.

In order to safeguard your child we will need copies of any court ordered custody agreements. Without a custody agreement, we are not able to prevent the release of your child to a parent.

If a child has not been picked up after closing and we have not heard from you, attempts will be made to contact you, and the contacts listed as Emergency and Release Contacts. Provisions will be made for someone to stay with your child as long as possible, but if after 1 hour we have not been able to reach you or a person listed as an Emergency and Release Contact, we will call the local child protective services agency.

Right to Refuse Child Release

We may refuse to release children if we have reasonable cause to suspect that any person picking up a child is under the influence of drugs or alcohol, or is physically or emotionally impaired in any way that may endanger the child. To protect your child, we may request that another adult listed as an Emergency and Release Contact pick-up the child or we may call the police to prevent potential harm to your child. Reoccurring situations may result in the release of your child from the program.

PERSONAL BELONGINGS

What to Bring

- **Infants:** enough clean bottles for a day's use, at least 6 diapers per day, and at least 2 changes of clothes per day. All bottles must be labeled and dated.

- **Toddlers:** enough clean bottles for a day's use (if applicable), six diapers and at least two changes of clothes per day. All bottles must be labeled and dated.
- **Older Toddlers:** at least two changes of clothes or more per day if going through the toilet training program. [click to insert any other requests for toilet training items]
- **Preschoolers:** at least one change of clothes, socks and shoes.
- **Kindergarteners:** at least one change of clothes, socks and shoes.
- **After School Care Children:** books for homework, appropriate play clothes

Please label all items brought from home with your child's name (i.e., clothes, bottles, diapers, pacifiers, crib sheet, blanket, etc.) to prevent items from becoming misplaced or lost. Valuables should be left at home, We are not responsible for lost or damaged items, Sheets and soiled clothing will be sent home on an as-needed basis for laundering and return to the center.

Cubbies

Upon enrollment each child will be assigned a "cubby." Cubbies are labeled with your child's name and photo. Please check your child's cubby on a daily basis for items that need to be taken home.

Lost & Found

You can look for lost items and bring found items to the Lost-and-found Box located at the front lobby area. Please note that we are not responsible for lost personal property.

Toys from Home

We request that you do not allow your child to bring toys from home into the center unless they are part of a show-and-tell activity.

NUTRITION

Foods Brought from Home

[A] We request that you do not bring food from home into our center.

[B] Food brought from home are not permissible:

- For Program Celebrations/Functions, Perishable food to be shared with other children must be store-bought and in its original package, a list of ingredients is required, and there must be enough food for all children. Leftover food will be discarded.

Good Lunch Box Suggestions for a Balanced, Nutritional Lunch.	
Turkey Whole Wheat Bread Tropical fruit salad Green Beans Milk	Chicken strips Whole Wheat Roll Orange wedges Broccoli Milk

Peanut Butter on Whole Wheat Bread Fresh fruit cup Mix Vegetables Milk	Tuna Salad Whole Wheat Bread Green Beans Carrots Milk
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Food Prepared for or at the Center

Food prepared for or at the center will be properly planned, prepared and portioned according to the Child and Adult Care Food Program (<http://www.fns.usda.gov/cnd/care/>) and the state requirements for food service.

Food Allergies

If your child has a food allergy, you must notify us in writing so that we can make appropriate substitutions. The written notification should list appropriate food substitutions and must be updated at least annually.

Food allergies can be life threatening and each child with a food allergy should have an action plan for emergency care completed by the family physician.

Meal Time

At meal time the dining table is set with disposable or real plates and flatware, and the food is placed in small bowls from which the children can help themselves. Everyone sits at the same table. Children are encouraged to serve themselves from food passed around each table. Good table manners are modeled and encouraged. Weekly menus are posted for viewing by parents/caregivers.

A caregiver who is trained in first-aid for choking is present at all meals.

Infant Feedings

Infant feedings follow these procedures:

- Infants will be held for bottle-feeding until able to hold his or her own bottle. Bottles will never be propped.
- Infants are fed “on cue” to the extent possible (at least every 4 hours and usually not more than hourly) and by a consistent caregiver/teacher.
- Breastfeeding is supported by providing a place for nursing mothers to feed their babies. Expressed breast milk may be brought from home if frozen or kept cold during transit. All breast milk and formula shall be returned to the child’s home or discarded at the end of each day. Previously frozen, thawed breast milk must be used within 24 hours. Bottles must be clearly labeled with the child’s name and the date the milk was expressed. Frozen breast milk must be dated and may be kept in the freezer for up to 3days.
- Breast milk and formula brought from home must be dated and labeled with the child’s name.
- Labels on all milk/formula containers should be resistant to loss of the name and date/time when washing and handling.
- Solid foods will only be introduced after a consultation with the child’s family.

Children 12 Months and Older

- No child shall go more than 4 hours without a meal or snack being provided.
- Children are encouraged to self-feed to the extent that they have the skills. Children are encouraged, but not forced to eat a variety of foods.
- Round, firm foods that pose a choking hazard for children less than 4 years of age are not permitted. These foods include: hot dogs, whole grapes, peanuts, popcorn, thickly spread peanut butter and hard candy.

School Aged Participants

- Before School childcare participants are transported to school in time for school breakfast. After school childcare participants will be served an afternoon snack

HEALTH

Immunizations

A Hearing, vision, nutrition and dental examination certificate (Form 3300) are required within 90 calendar days of program entry for ages 4 years and above. Immunizations (Form 3231) are required for all ages according to the current schedule recommended by the U.S. Public Health Services and the American Academy of Pediatrics, www.aap.org. Every February, we check with the public health department or the American Academy of Pediatrics for updates of the recommended immunization schedule. Our state regulations regarding attendance of children who are not immunized due to religious or medical reasons are followed. Unimmunized children are excluded during outbreaks of vaccine preventable illness as directed by the state health department.

All caregivers, teachers, and staff are required to be current with all immunizations routinely recommended for adults by the Advisory Committee on Immunization Practices (ACIP) of the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC).

Physicals

Routine physicals are required according to the current recommendations of the American Academy of Pediatrics, www.aap.org. A copy of your child's physical should be received before but must be received no later than [30] days after your child begins the program. Families are responsible for assuring that their child's physicals are kept up-to-date and that a copy of the results of the child's health assessment is given to the program.

Illness

We understand that it is difficult for a family member to leave or miss work, but to protect other children; you may not bring a sick child to the center. The center has the right to refuse a child who appears ill. You will be called and asked to retrieve your child if your child exhibits any of the following symptoms. This is not an all-inclusive list. We will try to keep your child comfortable but he/she will be excluded from all activities until you arrive.

- Illness that prevents your child from participating in activities.
- Illness that results in greater need for care than we can provide.
- Illness that poses a risk of spread of harmful diseases to others.

- Fever (100°F or higher under the arm, 101°F or higher in the mouth, 102°F or higher in the ear) accompanied by other symptoms.
- Diarrhea – stools with blood or mucus, and/or uncontrolled, unformed stools that cannot be contained in a diaper/underwear or toilet.
- Vomiting – green or bloody, and/or more than 2 times during the previous 24 hours.
- Mouth sores caused by drooling.
- Rash with fever, unless a physician has determined it is not a communicable disease.
- Pink or red conjunctiva with white or yellow eye discharge, until on antibiotics for 24 hours.
- Impetigo, until 24 hours after treatment.
- Strep throat, until 24 hours after treatment.
- Head lice, until treatment and all nits are removed.
- Scabies, until 24 hours after treatment.
- Chickenpox, until all lesions have dried and crusted.
- Pertussis (Whooping Cough), until 5 days of antibiotics.
- Hepatitis A virus, until one week after immune globulin has been administered.
- Tuberculosis, until a health professional indicates the child is not infectious.
- Rubella, until 6 days after the rash appears.
- Mumps, until 5 days after onset of parotid gland swelling.
- Measles, until 4 days after onset of rash.
- Has a physician or other health professionals written order that child be separated from other children?

Children who have been ill may return when:

- They are free of fever, vomiting and diarrhea for 24 hours.
- They have been treated with an antibiotic for 24 hours.
- They are able to participate comfortably in all usual activities.
- They are free of open, oozing skin conditions and drooling (not related to teething) unless:
 - The child's physician signs a note stating that the child's condition is not contagious, and;
 - The involved areas can be covered by a bandage without seepage or drainage through the bandage.
- If a child had a reportable communicable disease, a physician's note stating that the child is no longer contagious and may return to our care is required.

Allergy Prevention

Families are expected to notify us regarding children's food and environmental allergies. Families of children with diagnosed allergies are required to provide us a letter detailing the child's symptoms, reactions, treatments and care. A list of the children's allergies will be posted in the main area and kitchen. We are trained to familiarize ourselves and consult the list to avoid the potential of exposing children to substances to which they have known allergies.

Medications

All medications should be handed to a lead teacher with completed medication authorization form including specific written instructions for administration. Medications should never be left in the child's cubby, accessible to child or with the child to administer on their own.

Our staff will ensure that the medication is recorded along with the directions and proceed to dispense the medication as directed.

- **Prescription medications** require a note signed by the family and a written order from the child's physician. The label on the medication meets this requirement. The medication must include your child's name, dosage, current date, frequency, and the name and phone number of the physician. All medications must be in the original container (you may request pharmacies to fill your prescription in two labeled bottles). Please specify the dosage and time(s) to be administered for each medication. We do not administer expired medication
- **Non-prescription medications** require written permission and instructions signed by the child's primary care physician. The written permission must include your child's name, dosage, current date, frequency, and all medications must be in the original container. Non-prescription medication should not be administered for more than a 3-day period unless a written order by the physician is received.
- **Non-prescription topical ointments** (e.g., diaper cream or teething gel), sunscreen and insect repellent require a note signed by the parent, specifying frequency and dosage to be administered as well as the length of time the authorization is valid which cannot exceed 12 months.
The Authorization to Dispense External Preparations form must be completed before these medications can be administered

Communicable Diseases

When an enrolled child or an employee of the center has a (suspected) reportable disease, it is our legal responsibility to notify the local Board of Health or Department of Public Health. We will take care to notify families about exposure so children can receive preventive treatments. Included among the reportable illnesses are the following:

- Bacterial Meningitis
- Botulism
- Chicken Pox
- Diphtheria
- Hemophilus Influenza (invasive)
- Measles (including suspect)
- Meningococcal Infection (invasive)
- Poliomyelitis (including suspect)
- Rabies (human only)
- Rubella Congenital and Non-congenital (including suspect)
- Tetanus (including suspect)
- H1N1 Virus
- Any cluster/outbreak of illness
- Tuberculosis

SAFETY

Clothing

Please dress your child in practical clothing that allows for freedom of movement and is appropriate for the weather. Your child will be involved in a variety of activities including: painting, outdoor play, sand, water, and other sensory activities. Our playground is used as

an extension of the center, and daily programs are conducted outside whenever weather permits.

One particular aspect of concern is the risk associated with children's clothing that may become entangled with climbing or sliding equipment that could lead to choking or other serious harm. All drawstrings from children's clothes should be removed as a precaution.

Sandals and flip-flops are not appropriate for center play and make it difficult for your child to participate in some activities. Hair beads / rubber bands are not permissible in classes 2 years of age and under.

Extreme Weather and Outdoor Play

Outdoor play will not occur if the outside temperature is greater than 99 °F or less than 40 °F degrees.

Communal Water-Play

Communal, unsupervised water play is prohibited. Supervised children are permitted to engage in water-play. Water is emptied daily, and washing procedures are practiced to ensure that communal water-play does not spread communicable infectious disease.

Injuries

Safety is a major concern in child care and so daily safety inspections are completed inside and outside the center area in order to prevent injuries. First aid will be administered by a trained caregiver in the event that your child sustains a minor injury (e.g., scraped knee). You will receive an incident report outlining the incident and course of action taken. If the injury produces any type of swelling or needs medical attention, you will be contacted immediately. Each classroom is equipped with a first aid kit meeting the state regulations.

In the event of a serious medical emergency, the child will be taken to the hospital immediately by ambulance, while we will try to contact you or an emergency contact.

Biting

Biting is a normal stage of development that is common among infants and toddlers – and sometimes even among preschoolers. It is something that most young children will try at least once.

When biting happens, our response will be to care for and help the child who was bitten and to help the biter learn a more appropriate behavior. Our focus will not be on punishment for biting, but on effective behaviors that address the specific reason for biting.

Notes will be written to the family of the child who was bitten and the biter's family. We will work together with the families of each to keep them informed and to develop strategies for change.

Respectful Behavior

All children and families will be treated with respect and dignity. In return, we expect the same from all of our families. We will not tolerate hostile or aggressive behavior. If this occurs, we reserve the right to ask you to control your behavior or to remove your children from our care. It is expected that each child be respectful of the program's property, a certain amount of wear and tear is normal, you will be required to replace any object or its value, in the event that your child has damaged or broken any property of the program.

Smoking

The poisons in secondhand smoke are especially harmful to infants and young children's developing bodies, therefore the indoor and outdoor center environment and vehicles used by the center are non-smoking areas at all times. The use of tobacco in any form is prohibited on the center's premises.

Prohibited Substances

The use of alcohol or illegal drugs is prohibited on the center's premises. Possession of illegal substances or unauthorized potentially toxic substances is prohibited.

Any adult who appears to be inebriated, intoxicated, or otherwise under the influence of mind-altering or polluting substances is required to leave the premises immediately.

Dangerous Weapons

A dangerous weapon is a gun, knife, razor, or any other object, which by the manner it is used or intended to be used, is capable of inflicting bodily harm. Families, children, staff or guests (other than law enforcement officers) possessing a dangerous weapon will not be permitted onto the premises.

In cases that clearly involve a gun, or any other weapon on our premises, the police will be called and the individual(s) involved will be immediately removed from the premises. This policy applies to visible or concealed weapons.

Child Custody

Without a court document, both parents/guardians have equal rights to custody. We are legally bound to respect the wishes of the parent/guardian with legal custody based on a certified copy of the most recent court order, active restraining order, or court-ordered visitation schedule. We will not accept the responsibility of deciding which parent/guardian has legal custody where there is no court documentation.

Suspected Child Abuse

We are required by law to report all observations of child abuse or neglect cases to the appropriate state authorities if we have reasonable cause to believe or suspect a child is suffering from abuse or neglect or is in danger of abuse or neglect, no matter where the abuse might have occurred. The child protective service agency will determine appropriate action and may conduct an investigation. It then becomes the role of the agency to determine if the report is substantiated and to work with the family to ensure the child's needs are met. Our center will cooperate fully with any investigation and will maintain confidentiality concerning any report of child abuse or neglect.

EMERGENCIES

Lost or Missing Child

In the unlikely event that a child becomes lost or separated from a group, all available staff will search for the child. If the child is not located within 10 minutes, the family and the police will be notified.

Fire Safety

Our center is fully equipped with fire safety items including alarms, lights and rolling cribs.

Our fire evacuation plan is reviewed with the children and staff on a monthly basis.

We conduct monthly fire drills

Emergency Transportation

In the event your child needs to be transported due to a medical emergency, if no other authorized person can be contacted and the need for transportation is essential, an ambulance will be called for transportation. A proper escort will accompany and remain with the child until a family member or emergency contact arrives.

CENTER POLICIES

Our center policies not included in this handbook are reviewed quarterly and updated as needed. They are available for review upon request to the center director.

Family Handbook Acknowledgement

Please sign this acknowledgement, detach it from the handbook, and return it to the center prior to enrollment.

This handbook may be updated from time-to-time, and notice will be provided as updates are implemented.

Thank you for your acknowledging the policies and procedures we have established for the safety and welfare of all children in our care. We look forward to getting to know you and your family.

I have received the **Kidz Fortress Childcare and Learning Center Family Handbook**, and I have reviewed the family handbook with a member of the **Kidz Fortress Childcare Learning Center** staff. It is my responsibility to understand and familiarize myself the Family Handbook and to ask center management for clarification of any policy, procedure or information contained in the **Kidz Fortress Childcare Learning Center Family Handbook** that I do not understand.

Recipient Signature

Date

Center Staff Signature

Date

PARENT ADVISORY COMMITTEE

We offer a variety of ways for families to participate in the growth and improvement of our program. We encourage families to take an active role.

Advisors:

- Discussion of Program Goals – annual meeting for families to provide input into our plan for the program.
- Parent Advisory Committee – meets 4 times a year to review progress toward annual goals.
- Classroom Representative – serves as a liaison between classroom parents and teachers
- Home and School Committee – meets monthly to plan family events and fundraisers

Family Events: We have several events throughout the year that bring our entire community together. Watch for the announcements!

- Open House
- Back to School Night
- Family Math Night
- Holiday Gathering
- Book Swap
- Fall Festival
- Annual Family Picnic

Classroom Activities: Enjoy and help your child's class with these special activities.

- Share a meal with your child
- Chaperone field trips
- Read to children at arrival or pickup
- Volunteer in the classroom
- Donate requested items
- Serve as a parent representative
- Welcome new families
- Contribute to class Pot Luck Meal
- Family Teacher conferences

Family/Parent Workshops: Our menu of family workshops changes annually. Below is a list of workshops we typically offer. We try to offer these in the early evening or on Saturdays. See the monthly calendar for scheduled topics. We welcome requests for workshop topics.

- Positive Guidance and Loving Discipline
- Toilet Training
- Safety in the Home
- Child Proofing Your Home
- Brain Development
- Nutrition and Exercise for Small Bodies
- Supporting Your Child in Times of Stress
- Food Allergies
- How to Prepare for a Conference
- Warning Signs for Developmental Delays
- Value of Reading to Your Child
- Everyday Math