



Appletree Childcare & Learning Center

3675 E Crown Ave Philadelphia PA 19096

School Office: 215 281-9223

School Fax: 215 281-9224

E-mail: childcarepa@comcast.net

<https://www.appletreechildcare.net/>

Appletree Childcare & Learning Center

The Parent Handbook Calendar Year 2024

Revised: May 24, 2024

The Parent Handbook has been written to provide you with information about programs, policies, and procedures at Appletree Childcare & Learning Center. Families play a critical role in school readiness and preparing their children for success. Appletree Childcare & Learning Center provides a comprehensive program in safe, nurturing, and secure learning environments. Children are engaged in activities that help them grow mentally, socially, emotionally, and physically. As parents, we really need you to work with us to positively influence your child's learning and development.

Please keep this handbook in a convenient location so that you can refer to it as needed. Please note that the Handbook is continually updated with information; check with us for the latest version.

We want to hear from the parents. Please contact our staff with any questions or concerns. Appletree Childcare & Learning Center is licensed by the Department of Human Services, Philadelphia, PA.

Alyssa Gibson, MS, Director
Amy McShane, Assistant Director
Kelly Bryan, Administrative Lead

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Appletree Childcare & Learning Center is a certified Keystone STAR-4 preschool.

Welcome: Our Philosophy and Goals

Appletree Childcare & Learning Center is guided by our mission and our core values to help preschool children reach their full potential. We offer safe, clean, exciting, and creative high-quality classrooms with loving, engaged staff encouraging learning through play and discovery in a supportive, nurturing environment. We use The Creative Curriculum®, the #1 preschool curriculum that provides instruction, promotes language and literacy, nurtures math skills, and more in all classrooms, including Infants, Young Toddlers, Older Toddlers, Preschoolers, and pre-K children.

Appletree Childcare & Learning Center is a high-quality, Keystone STAR-4 certified preschool that strives for continuous improvement with a commitment to enhancing the social, emotional, cognitive, creative, and gross motor skills, as well as health and nutrition that helps children achieve developmental success.

Keystone Stars initiatives have been a defining moment in our evolution as a high-quality educational center. They have helped us create exciting learning environments and increase staff engagement in child care.

Admissions

Appletree Childcare & Learning Center has an open admissions policy. Admissions, service provisions, and client referrals shall be made without regard to race, color, religious creed, disability, ancestry, national origin (including limited English proficiency), age, or sex and in compliance with The American Disabilities Act (ADA).

Program services shall be made accessible to eligible persons with disabilities through the most reasonable, practical, and economically feasible methods available. These methods include but are not limited to equipment redesign, providing aides, and using alternative service delivery locations. Structural modifications shall be considered only as a last resort among available methods.

Appletree Childcare & Learning Center meets and exceeds the regulations and guidance set by the Philadelphia Department of Human Services and the Philadelphia Department of Public Health for the continual safe operation of a childcare center.

Teachers provide children with a safe, friendly, and secure classroom environment. Our rooms are busy, interesting, activity-centered spaces where children enjoy learning through play and exploration.

We at Appletree Childcare & Learning Center believe that children learn best when they are given opportunities to participate in activities and play that involve physical and social experiences. We carefully balance activities that develop cognitive skills with painting, block play, and dramatic play to enhance social and emotional development. The staff of caregivers and facilitators carefully structures the classrooms and plans learning experiences to guide children in their development.

Visiting Appletree Childcare & Learning Center

All families (parents, custodial parents, legal guardians) with children enrolled in our programs can visit their child's classroom. For prospective *new* enrollments, families must call our school office before arrival to schedule a tour.

Video Surveillance

Automated video surveillance is used at Appletree Childcare & Learning Center to monitor and record activity in all classrooms, hallways, and outside areas around our building. Our professional-quality system is designed to enhance our security and safety through monitoring. Cameras capture live video footage, which can be viewed in real time and is also recorded on our NVR. For privacy and safety reasons, viewing video images is not provided to parents. The viewing and assessment of video are done by our Director and School Office administration to ensure the privacy and safety of all children. In addition, our image data is not made available on the Internet. Parents who have any concerns should speak with our Director.

Code of Conduct

Parents and other family members of enrolled children are expected to be respectful and courteous to all our staff, other families, and their children. There are many children and their families at our center, and we ask parents to respect their right to privacy. Behavior that disregards this policy, either physical or verbal,

that is threatening, aggressive, or disrespectful, can result in exclusion from our center. Teachers and office staff are also covered under a policy code of conduct, and if a parent experiences a violation, they should report the incident and their grievance to our Director or school office.

Enrollment of Your Child

There are a number of forms that need to be completed for your enrollment. Our school office will assist parents with these forms. An Enrollment Agreement, a Health Assessment completed by your child's pediatrician, an Emergency Contact Form, a meal program form, and other documents are included. There is an initial registration fee at the time of registration, which helps us manage our administrative costs. Parents will be asked to periodically update their forms, and our school office will advise you at such time.

Once children are enrolled, they are assigned to a specific classroom based on their age and development. Appletree Childcare & Learning Center provides programs in separate classrooms for Infants, Young Toddlers, Older Toddlers, Preschool, Pre-K, and PHLpreK age groups. Each classroom has a maximum number of children and a specific child-to-staff ratio that we maintain at all times.

Appletree Childcare & Learning Center runs its programs for 52 weeks each year in our Infant, Young Toddler, older toddler, Preschool, and pre-K classrooms. The PHLpreK program runs consistent with the Philadelphia District school year, and a summer camp program is available. Contact us for information.

Confidential Information

Sensitive information that our center maintains on individual children under our care and their families is treated with strict confidentiality and shared internally on a need-to-know basis. Examples are (but not limited to) the Emergency Contact form, Health Assessment, Meal application, and other documentation maintained in your child's file. The Department of Human Services (DHS) and other authorized governmental agencies have the right to inspect confidential files. Photos and videos of your child are encouraged, but parents should be mindful of the privacy of other children in any photos or videos.

Photography

In our classrooms, photos are an essential communication tool for teachers, parents, and staff throughout the school year. We regularly hear from parents about how much they appreciate receiving these photos from the teachers. Photos help prompt parents with talking points about their children's experiences, which is important because many students (especially the very young) do not always articulate what they did at school or what they are learning. So, we may sometimes share photos with you using the **Remind App**. Our school office staff will help you get set up with the app.

Child Vaccinations

Appletree Childcare & Learning Center mandates vaccinations for enrolled children, and we reserve the right to refuse a child who is not vaccinated. There are no exemptions from immunization for religious belief or strong personal objection equated to a religious belief. The child's health assessment from their pediatrician will be kept in the child's record. Exemption from immunization for reasons of medical need shall be documented by a written, signed, and dated statement from the child's physician or physician's assistant and will be reviewed by the Director regarding admission into our program.

Tuition

Appletree Childcare & Learning Center accepts state tuition subsidies through Child Care Works (CCW or ELRC), our PHLpreK programs, and private pay. Our school office staff and Director can refer you to the appropriate agencies that offer tuition subsidies. Families are responsible for any co-pays identified by the state subsidy provider in your subsidy agreement. Private pay fees at Appletree are very competitive with other childcare programs in the area. Families are also responsible for paying tuition regardless of absences due to illness, vacation, holidays, staff in-service days, or weather.

Tuition Payments & Online Portal

Tuition is paid weekly. We offer the [MyProcure](#) online portal for payments by credit card, debit card or ACH, and to display your account tuition and payments. Our school office staff will help parents get set up in this system. Additionally, parents can pay at the school office, where we accept cash, credit cards, debit cards,

personal checks, and money orders. Receipts are also available upon request.

No credit is given for vacation time, holiday closures, a child's illness, an emergency closure, or adverse weather. Your payment guarantees your child's spot in the classroom. Non-payment of tuition is grounds for immediate dismissal of your child from the program. There is no multiple-child discount.

A returned check from the bank is assessed a \$35.00 processing fee, which is billed to the family. If two or more checks are returned from the bank uncollected, Appletree Childcare & Learning Center may require tuition payments by cash, debit or credit card, or money order.

If a parent receives a tuition subsidy and then loses that subsidy, the parent is responsible for contacting our school office and advising us of their situation. The parent is also responsible for any tuition costs incurred.

Infant Room: What to Bring

Parents that wish to enroll in our infant room should note that the very minimum age of the child must be 6 weeks. If a child was a premature birth, then we may set the enrollment at 3 months or later. We encourage parents to discuss this with our director or school office. If possible, we prefer that parents not wear their street shoes into the infant room. Our office staff will advise parents upon enrollment what to bring for their infants, including formula, bottles, diapers, diaper cream, sheets, bibs, and other items.

Toddler & Preschool Classrooms: What to Bring

There are general guidelines for these rooms. Bring a child's bag or backpack with the items that your child may need, such as a sheet for nap time, a small blanket, extra clothes to change into, a plastic bag for soiled clothing, extra warm clothes during cold weather, extra shoes/sneakers, sunscreen (summer months), bug spray, and your child's classroom teacher can help with other suggestions. All items must be marked with your child's name, including the bag or backpack.

Toys from Home

We request that children do not generally bring a personal toy from home. The exception would be for Show & Tell days, when the toy must remain in your child's cubby or with the teacher until it is time for the activity.

Jewelry

We suggest that children not arrive at school wearing jewelry, hair beads, or other fashion accessories for safety reasons. In addition, if lost, these items can be very upsetting for your child. Appletree Childcare & Learning Center does not take responsibility for lost personal items.

Mandated Reporters

Under the Child Protective Services Act (23 Pa. C.S. Chapter 63), all Appletree Childcare & Learning Center staff are, based upon this law, mandated reporters. Staff are required to report any suspicion of abuse or neglect to the appropriate authorities (55 Pa. Code § 3490.11). Employees are not required to discuss their suspicions with parents before reporting the matter to the appropriate authorities, nor are they required to investigate the cause of a suspicious mark, behavior, or condition before making a report. We take this responsibility very seriously and will make all warranted reports to Childline at 800-932-0313. The Child Protective Services Act is designed to protect all children's welfare and best interests. As mandated reporters, staff are not liable for reports made to Child Protective Services which are determined to be unfounded, provided the report was made in "good faith."

Limited English Proficiency LEP

Our enrollment policy regarding Limited English Proficiency (LEP) is designed to ensure that the staff makes every effort to promote communication and understanding for those children and their immediate families who are identified as having (LEP). Once enrolled, our staff will integrate that child into the classroom. If a child or family has been identified as needing translation or interpretive services, Appletree Childcare & Learning Center will assign a staff person who may speak their language to assist and/or reach out to other members of the family or a community representative to assist with translation services.

Any parents or guardians, who believe that they have been discriminated against based on LEP, may file a complaint of discrimination with any of the following:

Kelly Bryan, Amy McShane, Josh Borenstein or Bob Borenstein
Appletree Childcare & Learning Center
3675 E Crown Ave, Philadelphia PA 19114
Ph: 215 281-9223
e-Mail: childcarepa@comcast.net

Dept. of Human Services
Bureau of Equal Opportunity
Room 225, Health & Welfare Bldg.
P.O. Box 2675
Harrisburg PA 1710

Commonwealth of Pennsylvania
Dept. of Human Services
Bureau of Equal Opportunity, SE Office
801 Market St, Ste. 5034
Philadelphia PA 19107

PA Human Relations Commission
Philadelphia Regional Office
110 N 8th Street, Ste 501
Philadelphia PA 19107

U.S. Dept. of Health & Human Services
Office for Civil Rights
Suite 372, Public Ledger Bldg.
150 South Independence Mall West
Philadelphia PA 19106-9111

Full-Time & Part-Time Programs

Children who are enrolled full-time attend five days per week, Monday through Friday. Part-time is fewer than five days per week. If available, the days that the child attends may be on a fixed or flexible weekly schedule.

On a fixed schedule, the child attends the same days each week, while a flexible schedule has varying days based on the schedule needed for the child and the availability in the classroom.

Families who require a flexible schedule will be asked to provide a monthly schedule in advance of the days that they will need care. Whether the child is on a fixed or flexible schedule, families are not permitted to alternate or make up days missed due to illness, vacation, or closures due to inclement weather. We try to accommodate parents who have an emergency situation, but this needs to be discussed in advance with the school office.

At times, families may want to add an additional day to their child's schedule. These requests should be made to the school director or school office. A request for an additional day must be made at least 24 hours in advance. Acceptance will be pending based on availability and is not guaranteed. If accepted, the family will be charged the daily tuition rate for the additional day.

Parking & Pedestrian Safety

Appletree Childcare & Learning Center has an onsite parking lot for families for drop-off, pick-up, and special events. We ask that vehicles slowly enter and leave the parking lot at Appletree to ensure the safety of all children and to find a parking space. Pedestrian safety is crucial. Please do not park in the handicap-accessible space unless you have a handicap placard or disabled auto plate.

Arrival and Departure

Our front door is locked at all times. Parents will need to ring the bell and will be let into the building. When you arrive with your child, please store personal items in your child's school bag, such as coats, sweaters, or extra clothes. Escort your child to the designated drop-off area or classroom, and feel free to give any messages to the child's teacher. Please sign your child/children in and out.

When arriving, please be sure to fully close the entry door, as we need this for our security. We ask that parents not bring inappropriate foods and drinks for their children. Appletree provides nutritious meals and snacks, and parents are encouraged to participate. Parents can bring food for their child if it meets high-

quality U.S.D.A. meal standards (reference: USDA MyPlate food groups, proportions, and healthy choices).

Preparing Your Child for Arrival

When arriving, your child's name must be placed on all items that you bring to Appletree for your child, including the bag or backpack. We encourage children not to bring their own personal toys to Appletree. If your child does bring a preferred toy or an item for Show & Tell, please leave the toy in their school bag and inform their child's classroom teacher.

After dropping off your child and departing Appletree, please call us if you have any questions or wish to discuss a concern. Sometimes, we are so very busy with the children that we do not get to every incoming phone call; if your call goes to voice mail, please leave a message or try us back a short time later. You can also email us at childcarepa@comcast.net or connect directly with your child's teacher on the **Remind App**. The Remind App is a messaging communication platform specifically used in education between parents and teachers, and our staff can help you set it up on your phone.

Smoke-Free

Appletree Childcare & Learning Center is a smoke-free building. We also request that parents not smoke or vape on or near our property or in sight of children in our care.

Drop-Off

Drop-offs must happen by or before 9:30 am (except for the PHLpreK program). All classes (aside from PHLpreK) start promptly at 9:30 am. Our front door staff are no longer assigned to answering the door after that time. Late drop-offs then become disruptive and even unsafe. Please call before 9:00 AM if you know your child will be late to school so that we can effectively accommodate them.

For PHLpreK students, the door opens at 7:30 am. Pick-up is 1:30 – 2:00 pm. Option: for PHLpreK students, Appletree offers a Before School (drop-off: 6:30 am-7:30 am) and Aftercare (pickup: 2:00 pm-6:00 pm) program at additional cost, and schedules are on a fixed basis. For this program, you may also qualify for a CCW tuition subsidy. Please ask about this option and rates should you need additional care for your child and speak to our director or the school office. Space is limited and not guaranteed.

Please inform your teacher if your child is absent from school due to illness, appointments, vacation, or any other reason. The teacher may ask why the child was, is, or will be absent. This information helps us track contagious illnesses and respond accordingly.

Pick-Up

When picking up your child at the end of the day, you will be greeted by our staff. We ask that parents proceed to their child's classroom. Remember to check the child's daily sheet to gain a sense of their day. Also, check any bedding or clothing being sent home as they may be soiled, thus needing to be replaced for the next school day. If you have any further questions or concerns about your child's day, please feel free to call or email the center or contact your child's teachers directly on the Remind App.

The center maintains an **Emergency Contact/Parental Consent** form. You must list on this form any persons (in addition to the parents) you authorize to pick up your child. At the end of the day, a child will not be permitted to leave the center with anyone who has not been previously authorized by the parent. You can update this form at any time by providing a new form to our school office and signing & dating it.

If it becomes necessary for someone else to pick up your child and they are not on the Emergency Contact/Parental Consent Form, the parent must provide written advance authorization. If you are unable to provide written notification, the parent must call the center and speak directly with the child's teacher or director to advise us of your authorized pick-up plans.

A child will not be released to a parent/guardian or other authorized person if the staff suspects that this person may be under the influence of drugs or alcohol. An authorized pickup person must provide the child with a proper seat restraint appropriate for his/her age and weight. If a parent is restricted from picking up their child due to a court order, then a copy of the court order must be provided to Appletree Childcare & Learning Center, which will be placed into the child's confidential file.

Late Pick-Up Policy

Appletree closes at 6:00 PM. Our staff appreciates that the children are picked up prior to closing. For each late pickup, a fee of **\$1.00** is charged to the parent for every **1-minute** interval or time thereafter 6 PM. The late fee is paid directly to the staff members.

If you pick up your child late, please call the center to inform the staff of your anticipated arrival time. If we do not hear from you by 6:00 PM, we will contact a person on your child's Emergency Contact list and ask them to pick up the child, and the late fee will be added to your account. Late pickup charges may then apply.

Parent's Right of Access

A parent of a child in our care shall be permitted free access, without prior notice, throughout the child care space whenever children are in care, unless a court of competent jurisdiction has limited the parental right of access to the child, and a copy of that order has been provided to Appletree and is on file. Reference: 55 Pa. Code § 3290.20. In addition, all parents/guardians of enrolled children are entitled to participate in their child's classroom activities unless a court order limits their visit, which must be on file at Appletree.

Court Orders

In cases where the child is the subject of a court order, due to a Custody Order, Restraining Order, or Protection from Abuse Order, a parent/guardian must provide Appletree with a Certified Copy of the most recent order and all amendments thereto. The orders of the court will be strictly followed unless the custodial parent(s) requests a more liberal variation of the order in writing. In the case where both parents are afforded shared/joint custody by order of the court, both parents must sign the request for a more liberal interpretation of the order. Any changes to the court order must be provided to Appletree Childcare & Learning Center to ensure your child's safety.

In the absence of a court order on file with Appletree Childcare & Learning Center, both parents shall be afforded equal access to their child as stipulated by law. Appletree cannot, without a court order, limit one parent's access by request of the other parent, regardless of the reason. If a situation presents itself where one parent does not want the other parent to have access to their child, we suggest that the parent keep the child with them until a court order is issued, since our rights to retain your child are secondary to the other parent's right to immediate access. Appletree staff will contact the local police should a conflict arise. We urge parents not to involve their classroom teachers in personal disputes over custody, visitation schedules, child support, and other related issues.

Dismissal of a Child from our Program

Appletree Childcare & Learning Center understands the importance of a high-quality preschool experience for young children. Our teachers and Director make every effort to help young children transition into their classroom, and we use many classroom management strategies based on safety and encouragement. The teachers may set goals for improvement that refer to the child's behavioral, physical, language, and/or learning issues. Documentation based on observations may be provided to the parent, and a parent conference may be scheduled. If none of our strategies are successful, and if there are continuing safety issues, then Appletree reserves the right to dismiss the child from our program. If dismissal is necessary, then we require parents to leave in a calm and respectful manner.

Child Illness

Sending your child to Appletree Childcare & Learning Center who is showing signs of an illness or is overmedicated to hide the symptoms is not permitted. Children should be kept at home until symptoms subside. If your child is at Appletree and shows signs of an illness, the parent will be called to pick up. If your child has been ill, see their pediatrician and provide us with a note that your child can resume preschool.

A doctor's note is required upon return to class if your child is absent for three or more days due to illness. Children sent home due to an illness that presents while at Appletree's school are at the director's discretion to return to school.

Meals & Snacks Food Service

Appletree Childcare & Learning Center offers a free, high-nutrition meal program for all enrolled children and participates in the USDA Child and Adult Care Food Program (CACFP). We serve breakfast, lunch, and afternoon snacks, meeting standards established by the U.S. Department of Agriculture for young children. For example, lunch includes protein, fruit, vegetables, grain, and milk.

No pork is served in any of our foods. Meal substitutions will accommodate children with food allergies, religious dietary restrictions, or special needs. Infants are provided with Iron-Fortified formula, cereals, and other foods. The school office will provide each family with an application submitted to a program administrator. Families that do *not* wish to participate in the meal program must pack meals for their children. Appletree Childcare & Learning Center provides bowls, plates, napkins, and utensils.

Breakfast is served from 8:00 to 8:30 AM, lunch is from 11:30 to 12:00 Noon, and afternoon snacks are at 3:00 PM (1:00 PM for PHLpreK class). This meal schedule does not apply to children in the Infant Room. Infants follow their own individual schedules and are fed when hungry.

If families provide lunch, it should be sent to school in the child's lunchbox. Lunch boxes then get stored in our refrigerators. Put your child's name on all their items.

School Schedule

Appletree Childcare & Learning Center is open Monday through Friday, 6:30 AM until 6:00 PM, 12 months per year. The center is closed on the days listed in the Enrollment Agreement or provided by the school office. PHLpreK has a different schedule than the rest of Appletree because this program follows the Philadelphia School District calendar for days off. Therefore, PHLpreK children can be added to our extended care on those holidays on an as-needed basis and at additional cost. Parents should discuss this with the Director.

Holiday Closures

Appletree Childcare & Learning Center is closed on certain federal holidays. Families will be notified in advance of any changes in the closure schedule. You can also review these dates by a) the Enrollment Agreement, b) asking the front door staff person, c) contacting teachers via Remind App, or d) calling the school office or the Director.

Supervision of Children

Children at Appletree Childcare & Learning Center are supervised at all times when under the care of a teacher. Within the center, staff members are assigned to the supervision of specific children in their classroom based on their age group. In addition, all teachers must maintain specific child-to-staff ratios when supervising. It is our policy to use gentle and encouraging language with all children in our care.

When families arrive or depart Appletree Childcare & Learning Center with their child, the child is under the family member's direct care at that time and, therefore, not under the supervision of Appletree staff.

Appletree Childcare & Learning Center meets and exceeds the standards set by the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania for the employment of staff. All our teachers must be at a minimum of 18 years of age. Each teacher must also have at least 2 years prior experience working with children and with verifiable references, pass multiple security clearances (including the PA child abuse clearance, national child abuse clearance, PA state police clearance and the FBI clearance), complete a physical health assessment (including the Mantoux screen) from a qualified health care provider, submit their high school and college diplomas, submit transcripts, undergo training for Fire Safety, Mandated Reporting, and CPR/First Aid, and take additional training and coursework in early childhood education on an ongoing basis.

In addition, all staff must be passionate and engaging when working with children. We hire teachers able and willing to work cohesively with their team, children, and families while creating an age and developmentally appropriate environment. Teachers must meet standards of conduct as described in their employee handbook and consistent with Keystone Stars certification standards.

Inclement Weather

We understand that childcare is a necessity, and our families depend on this care. Thus, every effort will be made to keep the center open. However, there will be times when the weather is severe enough to make getting to Appletree Childcare & Learning Center difficult and even unsafe for families and staff. Under such adverse conditions, opening the center later than 6:30 AM or closing it earlier in the day may be necessary.

If the Philadelphia School District closes due to adverse weather or the anticipation of adverse weather, then Appletree Childcare & Learning Center will also close. If the Philadelphia School District opens late due to weather, then Appletree may open late as well.

To keep families informed on the status of the center's closures please feel free to check in with your child's teacher or the school administrative office (215-281-9223), and check our Facebook page for updates at: <https://www.facebook.com/p/Appletree-Childcare-and-Learning-Center-100054249801130/>

Withdrawal of a Child

Dismissal by Appletree: A child may be dismissed from Appletree if the director determines that the child is not adjusting to the center's program and after a discussion with the family regarding their child's best interests for care.

A child may also be dismissed if the family's language or actions are aggressive or abusive to their child or to any Appletree staff member. Once dismissed, the family will no longer have any rights to be on our premises and will also not be charged tuition from the date of the discharge.

Withdrawal by a Parent: If a parent voluntarily withdraws their child, we request, if possible, a two-week advance written notice to the director of Appletree Childcare & Learning Center. A minimum of two weeks of tuition will be charged from the day that the written notice is given.

Occasionally, a family will express a desire to withdraw their child from Appletree Center during the summer months *only* and then return in the Fall. The only way to guarantee a spot for your child in September is to keep them enrolled and continue to pay tuition through the summer. If you find it necessary to withdraw your child for the summer, you must re-enroll them for the fall and may be added to a waitlist. Appletree runs its programs 52 weeks each year.

The exemption is the PHLpreK program, which runs 180 days per year. Parents of PHLpreK children can enroll their child in the Appletree Summer Camp program, at additional cost which may be covered by subsidy (if the family qualifies) or as private pay. Contact the Director for additional information.

Transitioning to Another Educational Center

Appletree Childcare & Learning Center helps your child prepare for kindergarten. Children who will be 5 years old on or before September 1st are eligible for kindergarten, and parents should register their child at a neighborhood elementary, charter, or periodic school.

Health Assessments

Pennsylvania law requires each child to be examined by a licensed physician. A completed child Health Assessment, signed and dated by the pediatrician, must be provided to Appletree no later than 30 days after the child's enrollment date. Appletree provides the Health Assessment form that must be completed by your pediatrician.

If your child's Health Assessment is not received within 30 days, or if their yearly updated Health Assessment is not received within 30 days of the expiration date, then Appletree reserves the right to withdraw the child. Each child must have a physical examination and a health appraisal updated annually or more frequently as recommended by the American Academy of Pediatrics or The Center for Disease Control. The health appraisal from the pediatrician must include:

- A review of the previous health history
- A physical examination
- Growth assessments

- Review and update of the child's immunization status.
- Any recommendations pertaining to the physician's assessments of a disability or health problem and any recommendations for treatment.

If a child does **not** receive an immunization due to a medical reason, a parent's strong personal objection or due to a religious belief, then a statement to that effect must be provided to Appletree Childcare & Learning Center in writing by the physician and by the parent. A child that is not immunized can be excluded from enrollment in our programs at the discretion of our Director.

We also urge parents to regularly schedule a checkup for their child with a pediatric dentist.

Illness

Children need not be excluded from Appletree Childcare & Learning Center for a *minor* illness, such as a slight cold, as long as they can participate comfortably in program activities and do not require greater care than staff can provide without compromising the health and safety of the other children.

At the discretion of the director, families may be asked to pick up their child, who develops vomiting, diarrhea, and/or an auxiliary fever of 100 degrees either alone or in combination with other symptoms including sore throat, while at Appletree Childcare & Learning Center. Should the child continue to manifest these symptoms at home, the child cannot be brought to Appletree unless our Director provides specific authorization.

If a child shows symptoms of a potentially communicable disease, such as a suspicious rash, sores, or purulent eye discharge, a physician must verify the child's diagnosis and begin appropriate treatment. Prior to returning to the center, written documentation must be provided to Appletree from the child's physician concerning the condition of the child, noting when the child can return. The parent must also consult with the Director to verify that the child may return.

A sick child may not return to the center until at least 24 hours after the signs and symptoms have subsided, the fever is gone, and treatment has begun. However, the length of time a child is asked to stay home, to recover and/or prevent the further spread of contagious illnesses, can change depending upon the illness or symptoms. DO NOT send sick children to school on fever-suppressant medications. These only temporarily relieve the child of their symptoms and don't offer them the necessary rest and recovery that they deserve. Fever-reducing medication also does not suppress the contagiousness of the child's illness. As always, our priority is the safety of all the children in our classrooms.

Whatever the nature of your child's illness, please call the center to advise the staff that your child will not be coming, what the symptoms are, and when your child may be well enough to return.

Medications

The staff will not administer over-the-counter medications. The exception is prescription medications on a case-by-case evaluation basis. The Director may review this policy for a child when the parent provides written consent. An authorization form will be provided to you and must be completed and signed. All medications must be in the original container with a prescription label on it. Please give any medication to a staff member so it can be safely stored until it is to be administered. Please do not put any medication in your child's lunch box or in your child's cubby.

Children with Severe Allergies

For your child's safety, a parent must provide a list of all allergies related to food, environmental allergies or other, and sign/date the notification. Also include the child's pediatrician or other doctor that may be treating your child, the doctor's orders, and procedural guidelines regarding prevention and treatment.

Lice (Pediculosis)

Children with active lice or nits may not enter the Center. Parents must monitor their children for a minimum of 10 consecutive days following any infestation of lice in their child's head and advise Appletree Childcare & Learning Center staff if any nits or crawlers have been found. Additionally, Appletree staff reserve the right to check children's heads periodically and at random. If lice are found, Appletree follows the

procedures recommended by the American Academy of Pediatrics for a daycare center, which includes:

- a. Cleaning: Carpets are thoroughly and repeatedly vacuumed. The vacuum cleaner is removed to the outside of the building, and the waste is emptied. Hard surfaces, including countertops, tables, floors, and toys, are wiped down with a diluted bleach solution.
- b. Inspection: Teachers put on gloves and check the children's back hairlines, working up towards the sides and top of the head.
- c. Isolation: If activity on the scalp is found, the child is separated from the group, the clothes and bedding are placed into a plastic bag, and the parent is called. The daycare center is re-cleaned using the steps above.

IFSP & IEP

For children that have an Individualized Family Service Plan (IFSP) assessment or an Individualized Education Program (IEP) assessment, we request a copy of the report, which will be kept in the child's confidential file in the office. If a parent wants a representative of Appletree Childcare & Learning Center to be included in an IFSP or IEP team meeting for documenting progress or setting individual goals, then that request should be discussed with the classroom teacher, school office, or Director.

Children's Rest Time

Shortly after lunch, the children have a rest period. Each child has his/her own rest mat or cot that is labeled with the child's name. Each infant has his/her own crib. Parents are asked to provide a crib sheet and a child-sized blanket or quilt. The sheet and the blanket should be labeled with the child's name. Sheets and blankets are sent home on Friday to be laundered and are to be returned on Monday.

Clothing

There ***must always*** be a complete change of clothing, including socks, in your child's cubby. These articles should be labeled with your child's name and should be checked periodically to make sure that the clothes still fit and that they are appropriate for the season. If it is necessary for staff to use the extra clothes that were in your child's cubby, please make sure to replace the items the following day.

Children should come to school wearing comfortable, practical clothing that is appropriate for the season and allows for easy and safe movement as well as full participation in active and messy play. Clothes should be free of complicated fastening. Belts, suspenders, and one-piece rompers are difficult for staff when changing diapers and difficult for children when going to the bathroom. Since the children are often involved in creative activities that include the use of paints and glue, their clothing should be sturdy and washable so that the child does not have to worry about getting dirty.

The children go outside to play daily unless the weather permits. Please make sure your child wears shoes that are suitable for running and climbing - no clogs, sandals, or flip-flops that can easily slip off. Also, please be sure your child wears a heavy jacket, hat, and mittens once the weather turns cold.

Potty Training Policies

Children must be potty trained before entering a preschool/PreK (ages 3 to 5) classroom program.

Apple Child Care Center follows strict standards for changing and disposing of wet or soiled diapers and pull-ups. However, our preschool/PreK (ages 3-5) classrooms are not equipped with a changing table or a diapering sink, so we cannot accommodate a child who is not potty trained in these classrooms. In addition, when a teacher is busy changing a child's soiled clothing, it takes away from learning time for all other students and removes one adult from direct supervision and interaction with the rest of the class.

Apple Child Care teachers will compassionately and encouragingly assist your child in Potty Training in our older toddler (2-year-old) classrooms.

When parents and teachers mutually agree that the time is right, we embark on a collaborative journey to achieve the best possible outcome. Your teachers may suggest transitioning from diapers to underwear, and we encourage you to continue reinforcing potty training at home.

Then, your child must be potty trained to progress to a preschool/PreK classroom.

If your child is in an older toddler classroom and reaches the age of 3 years and 6 months and is not yet fully potty trained, then your child will no longer be eligible for our older toddler classrooms and will also remain ineligible for preschool/PreK classrooms. At that time, your child can be removed from our care at the discretion of the Director, as appropriate for your child's social, emotional, and cognitive development for their age.

We understand that even toilet-trained children will occasionally have accidents. By definition, "accidents" are unusual incidents that should happen infrequently. In these instances, children must be able to change clothes and clean themselves under the supervision of their teacher. The teacher will verbally encourage and assist the child as needed.

A toilet-trained child is a child who can do the following:

Communicate to the teachers that he/she needs to go to the restroom before they need to go • Alert him/herself to stop what he/she is doing to go and use the bathroom • Pull down his/her clothes and get them back up without assistance • Wipe him/herself after using the toilet (with minimal assistance for 3-year-olds) • Get on/off the toilet by him/herself • Properly wash and dry hands • Postpone going if they must wait for someone who is in the bathroom or if we are away from the classroom • Wake up during nap time should they need to use the bathroom.

Our teachers will ask your child many times throughout the day and before nap time if they need to use the bathroom. A teacher will assist children as needed, but children should be able to complete toileting activities independently. This is an issue that protects all concerned.

We ask that parents dress their child in clothing that he/she can easily manage independently. Please send a complete change of clothes appropriate for the season. These will be left at school in case of accidents and returned at the end of the school year. Parents will be notified if a child has a toileting accident.

Our policy is not in place to shame or punish a child or inconvenience our caregivers. Rather, it is a measure to ensure the safety and happiness of children and staff. We understand that accidents happen, but cleaning them in the preschool setting is time-consuming, and teachers are not spending time interacting with children and facilitating our curriculum safely. We thank you for your cooperation and understanding in this matter, which is crucial for maintaining a safe and conducive learning environment for all.

Toys & Other Personal Items

Our policy at Appletree Childcare & Learning Center is to strongly discourage children from bringing toys or small objects from home unless a special "Show & Tell" day has been announced. For Show & Tell, the toy should be left in the cubby upon arrival and until needed by the teacher. Small objects can be put into the mouth and present a choking hazard, especially to infants and toddlers who find tiny items fascinating.

Appletree Childcare & Learning Center is *not* responsible for personal items, including school district laptops or tablets, that are brought from home, should they be broken or lost.

When a child brings a toy from home, other children in the group want to play with it, too. Sharing often becomes a problem when this situation occurs. It is very upsetting for the owner if the toy gets lost or broken. Please keep your child's toys, money, action figures, small plastic figurines, and jewelry at home.

Parent-Teacher Conferences

It is very important to maintain good communication between parents and teachers. When a parent is actively involved in their child's progress, there is greater success.

Parent-teacher conferences are scheduled twice per year for all age groups so that your child's development can be discussed. Parents can request a conference at any time and are encouraged to contact our staff with any questions regarding their children and activities.

Communications

The staff at Appletree Childcare & Learning Center desires to remain in close contact with each child's parents. The most effective forms of communication include the **Remind App**, talking to your child's teacher, emailing, and calling the center directly.

The teachers maintain age-appropriate learning records for each child in their group. You will be offered the opportunity to discuss your child's progress with his/her teacher a few times during the year. Additionally, staff members are always available for more informal discussions concerning happenings at school.

We want our parents to feel involved in the program, so we hold special events and activities throughout the year that we encourage parents to attend.

Other sources of information for our parents include daily reports, letters and announcements placed in cubbies or posted in classrooms. Parents also receive monthly information indicating the themes children will be working on at school.

Incident Report

We make every effort to keep children safe! However, young children have accidents. Your child's teacher will complete an incident report and provide it to you. Parents are encouraged to discuss the incident with their child's teacher.

Disciplinary Procedures

Proper boundaries and appropriate structure enable children to function happily, safely, and successfully in a group situation. Teachers are encouraged to use calm, empathetic, and compassionate interventions when working with the children. This process is also used with escalated behaviors.

At Appletree Childcare & Learning Center, "cool-downs" are not used as a disciplinary measure but to prevent escalation and ensure safety. Teachers implement Social-Emotional Learning consistently to promote pro-social behaviors and minimize behavioral challenges.

Field Trips

A field trip may be scheduled if consistent with our class curriculum. Notification of a field trip will be sent home in advance of the trip and include the destination, date, time, reason for the trip, cost, and mode of transportation. Parents are required to provide written permission for their child to attend. Parents are encouraged but not required to attend the trip with their children.

Fire Drills

Appletree Childcare & Learning Center schedules fire drills regularly to ensure our children's safety and keep with the state regulations. During a fire/emergency drill, parents may not sign children into or out of the program. Parents must wait until the drill is complete and children have returned to the building to sign their child in or out of the program. Parents may feel free to wait with the child's class or in the designated safe zone outside of the building until the drill is complete.

Emergency Response Evacuation of the Building

All staff are trained in Emergency Response recognition and procedures each year. If a real fire emergency situation presents itself, staff will evacuate to our remote shelter-in-place location, supervise the children, and notify parents by telephone. Parents will also be advised where our designated remote shelter-in-place is located for pickup of their child, which would be John Hancock Elementary School or Mitchell Recreation Center.

Safety, First Aid

The safety of our children is our absolute priority. Every precaution will be taken to insure their well-being. Children will always be within line of sight and sound of their teachers. All teachers are required to receive training and pass certifications in first aid. Staff persons are also mandated to become certified in infant/child CPR.

PHLpreK

PHLpreK is a free, Philadelphia Pre-Kindergarten program funded through the city's beverage tax, and is offered to over 225 locations throughout the city. Appletree Childcare & Learning Center worked hard to get the PHLpreK program approved for our center, and we now have two (2) dedicated PHLpreK classrooms. Each classroom accommodates 20 children. Classroom hours are Monday-Friday 7:30 am to 1:30 pm for PHLpreK.

All children who are 3 or 4 by September 1, 2024, and reside in Philadelphia County are eligible. For additional information about this program visit <https://www.phlprek.org/> or contact our Director Alyssa Gibson or the school office regarding availability and enrollment for your child.

Before & After School Program (B&A)

Appletree Childcare & Learning Center offers Before & After School hours for PHLpreK students. In addition, there is a B&A program at Appletree for students grades K-5th that attend John Hancock Elementary School.

Before School: Hancock students that arrive at Appletree for the Before School morning program are then walked with our teacher to Hancock in time for the start of school. After School: Hancock students that are enrolled in the Appletree After School Program are picked up at Hancock by our teachers and walked to Appletree. We accept CCW tuition subsidy as well as private pay. Ask the school office for information on enrollment.

Firearms

At no time is any individual allowed into the building with a firearm, and any violation is an immediate dismissal from the program. The exception would be police officers, who are trained and required to carry their weapons at all times.

Additional Services

The staff is continuously assessing programs to offer, and we will advise you of these activities.

Please let us know whenever we can answer any questions or otherwise be of help!

Alyssa Gibson, MS, Director
Amy McShane, Assistant Director
Kelly Bryan, Administrative Lead



Appletree Childcare & Learning Center
3675 E Crown Ave, Philadelphia PA 19114
215-281-9223 Phone
e-Mail: childcarepa@comcast.net



Parent Signature Page

Please sign and date below to acknowledge that you have received a copy of **The Parent Handbook** (either printed or digital), which was prepared to provide you with a better understanding of our programs and policies. A copy of the Signature Page will be kept with your child’s file in our school office.

Appletree Childcare & Learning Center reserves the right to periodically change or add provisions in the Handbook to reflect our policies.

Please share any policy concerns or questions with our Director or Administrative Staff.

Parent/Caregiver/Legal Guardian Signature:

Parent/Caregiver/Legal Guardian Printed Name:

Child’s Name(s):

Date: _____

Child’s Name(s):
