

Appletree Childcare & Learning Center



Parent Handbook

Calendar Year 2019

Revised

The Parent Handbook has been written to provide you with information about programs, policies and procedures at Appletree Childcare & Learning Center. 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 is licensed by the Department of Human Services, Philadelphia

MPI 101042590-0001

Appletree Childcare & Learning Center
Operated by Appletree Developmental Center LLC
3665 East Crown Avenue, Philadelphia PA 19114

Phone: 215 281-9223 ▪ Fax: 215 281-9224

e-Mail: childcarepa@comcast.net

Website: www.appletreechildcare.net



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

KEYSTONE STARS

Reaching Higher for Quality Early Learning

Philosophy and Goals

Appletree Childcare & Learning Center offers safe, clean, exciting, and creative high-quality classrooms with loving, engaged staff that encourage learning through discovery in a nurturing environment

Appletree is a high-quality Keystone STAR-4 early childhood learning program that strives for continuous improvement with a commitment to enhancing social, emotional, cognitive, creative, and gross motors skills that help children achieve success in their development.

Keystone Stars initiatives have been a defining moment in our evolution as a high quality educational center, and in helping us create high-quality learning environments and staff engagement in the achievement of our care.

Appletree has an open admissions policy. Admissions, the provisions of services, and referrals of clients shall be made without regard to race, color, religious creed, disability, ancestry, national origin (including limited English proficiency), age or sex.

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, the provision of aides, and the use of alternative service delivery locations. Structural modifications shall be considered only as a last resort among available methods.

Appletree meets and exceeds the standards set by the Department of Human Services' for the operation of a child day care center facility.

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

We at Appletree believe that children learn best when they are given opportunities to participate in activities and games that involve concrete 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: All families that have children enrolled are free to visit our Center any time during operating hours.

Enrollment

Children are assigned to specific areas of the center based on their age and development.

Appletree provides programs and separate classrooms for Infants, Young Toddlers, Older Toddlers, Preschoolers, Pre-K, Before & After School-age care and Summer Camp. To be eligible for the infant room, children must be at least six weeks old.

Information that we maintain on individual children under our care and their families is treated in strict confidence.

Our 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 make every effort to integrate that child into the classroom.

Once a child or family has been identified as needing translation or interpretive services, Appletree 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, may file a complaint of discrimination with any or all of the following:

Josh Borenstein, Director
Appletree Childcare & Learning Center
3665 East Crown Avenue
Philadelphia PA 19114
Ph: 215 281-9223 • e-Mail:childcarepa@comcast.net

Commonwealth of Pennsylvania
Dept. of Human Services
Bureau of Equal Opportunity
Room 225, Health & Welfare Bldg.
P.O. Box 2675
Harrisburg PA 17105

Commonwealth of Pennsylvania
Dept. of Human Services
Bureau of Equal Opportunity
Southeast Regional 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 & Part-Day Programs

Children who are enrolled full-time attend five days per week, Monday through Friday. Part-time is fewer than 5-days per week, and schedules are developed based on the individual needs of a particular family. Part-day is defined as four (4) hours per day. Tuition rates are structured for each of the above situations.

The days that a child attends may be on either a fixed or flexible weekly schedule. On a fixed schedule, the child attends the same days each week, while on a flexible schedule the days may change week to week.

Parents who require a flexible weekly schedule will be asked to advise us so that we can maintain proper staff ratios.

Regardless of whether a child attends on a fixed or flexible schedule, parents will not be permitted to switch or make-up days missed due to illness or vacation. The only exception will be when a holiday falls on a day when a child who is enrolled part time and attends on regularly scheduled days is due to attend. When this happens, the parent will have the option of selecting an alternate day.

At times, parents may wish to add an additional day to their child's schedule. These requests should be made to the school director. A request for an extra day must be made at least 24 hours in advance and will be accepted pending availability. If accepted, the parent will be charged the daily tuition rate for the additional day.

Arrival and Departure

When you arrive with your child, please store personal items, such as coats, sweaters or extra clothes in your child's cubby. Escort your child to their room and feel free to ask the teachers about information that you would like to have about your child or about activities for that day. Parents are welcome to observe while their child is transitioning into the room.

Your child's name must be placed onto all items that you bring to Appletree for your child. We encourage children **not** to bring their own personal toys to Appletree. If your child does bring a naptime snuggle toy, or a toy for Show & Tell, please leave the toy in their cubby.

After dropping off your child and departing Appletree, should you have any questions or wish to discuss a concern, please call us. Sometimes we are so very busy with the children that we do not get to every incoming phone call; so if your call goes to voice-mail, please leave a message or try us back a short time later.

When picking your child up at the end of the day, please feel free to chat with one of the teachers in your child's room for information about your child's participation in that day's activities. You will also receive a daily report. In addition, please check your child's cubby at the end of each day and remove old soiled clothes or crib sheets, and to check for additional notices from Appletree or from your child's teacher.

Children must be signed in and out each day. In the morning, we prefer that children be brought to the center between 6:30 AM and 9:15 AM. Arrivals after 9:15 AM may be disruptive to activities already in progress, such as circle-time. If you are running late, we ask that you call the center and let the staff know the expected arrival time.

On a day that your child is not attending due to illness or if your child is taking a day off, please notify your child's teacher or director.

The center maintains an **Emergency Contact / Parental Consent** form. Persons (in addition to the parents) that you authorize to pick up your child must be listed on this form.

At the end of the day, a child will **not** be permitted to leave the center with anyone who has **not** been previously given authorization by the parent.

If it becomes necessary for someone else to pick up your child and they are not on the Emergency Contact / Parental Consent Form, then written advance authorization must be provided by the parent. In the event that 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. Appletree may have a loaner child care seat available which we will provide upon request (no charge).

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, 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 therein after 6 PM. The late fee is paid directly to the staff members.

If you will be picking up your child late, please call the center to advise the staff of your expected time of arrival. If we do not hear from you by 6:00 PM, we will call a person on your Emergency Contact list and ask them to pick up your child. You will be required to pay the late pick-up fee.

Parking Policy

Appletree has a large parking lot available to parents for drop-off, pickup, parent conferences, special events and class trips. We ask that vehicles **slowly** enter and depart the parking lot, as many children may be walking towards other cars or towards Appletree. No cars are allowed overnight parking in our lot.

Meals and Snacks

Appletree offers a free high-nutrition meal program for all enrolled children through a state CACFP sponsor. Each family must first complete an application, which is submitted to the program administrator. Families that do not wish to participate in the meal program can pack meals for their children. Appletree provides cups, bowls, spoons and forks.

Breakfast is served 8:00 - 8:30 am, lunch 11:30 am - 12 noon and afternoon snack at 3:00 pm. These meal times do **not** apply to the Infant Room children, as infants determine their own schedule and are fed when hungry.

If the parent provides lunch, it should be brought to school in a lunch box that is clearly labeled with your child's name. Once at Appletree, the parent should place the lunch box in one of our refrigerators.

School Schedule

Appletree is open Monday through Friday 6:30 AM until 6:00 PM, twelve months a year. The center is closed on the holidays that are listed on your enrollment agreement and these holidays are also listed below:

Holiday Closures Schedule

Appletree is closed on the following dates only. Parents will be notified in advance of any changes to the closure schedule. Schedule: please refer to your Enrollment Agreement form for the holiday schedule.

Supervision of Children

Children at Appletree are supervised at all times. Within the center, staff members are assigned to the supervision of specific children based on age groups. Staff members are physically present with the children in their area. It is our policy that gentle and encouraging language is to be used in the presence of children, as they are guided in their group and individual play.

At the time that a parent / guardian arrives at Appletree to either drop-off or pick up their child (children), their child/children are at that moment considered to be under parental supervision and therefore, not under the supervision of Appletree staff personnel.

Appletree meets and exceeds the standards set by the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania for the hiring of staff. Therefore, all of our teachers must be a minimum of 18 years of age; have two years of prior childcare experience, pass clearances in Child Abuse and Criminal Background screenings (Pennsylvania and FBI); complete a physical examination with the Mantoux screen and be able to provide a certified health assessment; take courses for certification in First Aid and Fire Safety; provide a high school (or higher) diploma; provide a minimum of two verifiable references validating past childcare experience, and take an additional 12-hours of classroom training each year in childcare related coursework.

In addition, all staff must be passionate and able to engage in program activities with children and other staff in an age and developmentally appropriate environment that meets the standards of conduct as described in their Employee Handbook.

Inclement Weather

Our staff understands that parents greatly depend on our services including days when the weather is not good. Therefore, every effort will be made to keep the center open on bad weather days. There may be times when the weather is extreme and the Appletree staff, like everyone else, will find it difficult and dangerous to travel. Under such adverse conditions it may be necessary to open the center later than the usual time of 6:30 AM. or close the center for the day.

If public schools close due to adverse weather, then Appletree is closed. Please check with the local news stations regarding school closings.

To keep parents informed as to the time or status of the center's opening in severe weather, the director will likely place a message on the answering machine by 6:15 AM of the day in question.

Tuition Policy

The fees at Appletree are very competitive with other child care programs in the area. Parents are responsible for tuition for those days in which their child is scheduled to attend, even when the child is out due to illness or vacation.

Weekly payments are due on Monday or the first day of the week that your child is scheduled to attend. Parents may choose to make payments biweekly or monthly in advance but not at the end of the payment period. Late payment of tuition will result in a penalty fee assessed at \$5.00 per day.

Appletree accepts cash, personal checks, as well as Visa and MasterCard debit and credit cards.

A returned check from the bank is assessed with a \$35.00 processing fee billed to the parent. If two or more checks are returned from the bank as uncollected, then Appletree may require future tuition be payable in cash, credit card or a money order.

No refunds are made for days missed due to illness, snow, vacation or holidays.

Discounts: if two or more children are enrolled at Appletree concurrently, then there is a 10% discount on the oldest child's tuition. This discount does not apply to families that receive state subsidy and may also have a copayment.

Scholarships are not available at this time.

Withdrawal of a Child

a) A two-week advance written notice to the director of Appletree is required when a child is voluntarily withdrawn from the center. A minimum of two weeks tuition will be charged from the day that the written notice is given.

b) A child may be dismissed from the center if the director determines that the child cannot adjust to the center's program, and after a discussion with the parent regarding the ability of the child to participate.

c) A child may also be dismissed if a parent's language or actions are abusive to children and/or to staff. If a child is dismissed from the center, no tuition will be charged from the date of dismissal.

Occasionally, a parent expresses a desire to remove his/her child from Appletree during the summer months. The only way to guarantee a spot for your child in September is to keep your child enrolled and pay tuition throughout the summer months. Should you find it necessary to withdrawal your child and re-enroll for September, you must do so for a minimum of 8 weeks and you must provide the director with two weeks advance notice. Furthermore, you will have to reapply for September and your child's name will be placed on our waiting list.

Transitioning to Another Educational Setting

Appletree will assist you and your child in transitioning to Kindergarten or another educational setting by providing a packet of useful information on transitions, and copies of appropriate child records. Our Pre-K class visits John Hancock Elementary each spring to help familiarize and prepare the children for their future setting.

Health Assessments

Pennsylvania law requires each child to be examined by a licensed physician, and that a completed child Health Assessment, signed and dated by the pediatrician, must be provided to the center no later than 30 days following the child's enrollment date. 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. (See the immunization chart on the last page of this handbook.) 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 by the physician or by the parent.

Illness

Children need not be excluded from Appletree for a minor illness, such as a 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.

The director, at his discretion, may ask that a parent 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. Should the child continue to manifest these symptoms at home, the child cannot be brought to the Appletree, unless the director provides specific authorization.

A sick child may not return to the center until 24 hours after the signs and symptoms have subsided, the fever is gone, and treatment has begun.

If a child shows symptoms of a potentially communicable disease, such as, a suspicious rash, sores, purulent eye discharge, then a physician must verify the child's diagnosis and begin an appropriate treatment. Written documentation must be provided to Appletree from the child's physician concerning the condition of the child prior to returning to the center.

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 administer over-the-counter and prescription medications only when the parent provides written consent. An authorization form will be provided to you, and it must be completed and signed. All medications must be in the original container, and it is the responsibility of the parent to label the container with the child's name, and provide dosage and frequency of administration. 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.

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 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 emptied. Hard surfaces, including counter tops, tables, floors and toys, are wiped down with a diluted bleach solution.
- b. Inspection: Teachers put on gloves and check the back hairlines of the children, 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 placed into a plastic bag, and the parent 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.

Children's Rest Time

Shortly after lunch the children have a rest period. Each child has his/her own rest mat 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. It is also acceptable for your child to bring in one small stuffed animal to snuggle with at rest time.

Clothing

There **must always** be a complete change of clothing, including socks, in the extra clothes box 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 the box, 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 free of complicated fastening. Belts, suspenders, 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 every day unless the weather is rainy or extremely cold. Please make sure your child wears shoes that are suitable for running and climbing - no clogs, sandals, or flip-flops please. Also, please be sure that he/she wears a heavy jacket, hat, and mittens once the weather turns cold.

Toys & Other Personal Items

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

Appletree is not responsible for toys 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 that toy too. Quite often sharing becomes a problem when this situation occurs. It is very upsetting for the owner if the toy should get lost or broken. Therefore, except for a stuffed animal at rest time, please keep your child's toys, money, action figures, small plastic figurines, and jewelry at home.

Parent-Teacher Conferences

Maintaining good communication between the parent and teacher is very important. When a parent is actively involved in their child's progress, there is greater success.

Parent-Teacher conferences are scheduled so that the development of your child can be discussed. Parents are encouraged to contact our staff with any questions regarding their children and activities.

Communications

It is the desire of the staff at Appletree to remain in close contact with the parents of each child. 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; therefore we hold special events and activities throughout the year which 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 calendars indicating the themes children will be working on at school.

Disciplinary Procedures

Proper limits and good structure enable children to function happily, safely and successfully in a group situation. Teachers praise good behavior. Some children have difficulty developing self-control. These situations are handled in a firm and loving manner with fairness and patience.

"Time-outs" help a child regain composure. We follow the rule of thumb that a time-out should be no longer than the child's age (one minute per year). Children should always be spoken to and treated with respect and kindness.

Fire Drills

To ensure the safety of our children and in keeping with the state regulations, Appletree schedules fire drills regularly.

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 encouraged to become certified in infant/child CPR.

Additional Services

The staff is continuously assessing programs to offer and we will appraise you as these activities become available.

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

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