

Harrisonburg-Rockingham Child Day Care Centers, Inc.
Parent Handbook
(Updated 1/23/23)

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Harrisonburg-Rockingham Child Day Care Center
P.O. Box 344
Harrisonburg, VA 22803
Phone: (540)434-5268
Fax: (540)214-2702
Email: hrdaycare@verizon.net
Web: hrdaycare.org

Executive Director – Delores Jameson
Office Manager – Natasha Keplinger

I. Philosophy

The center’s program is based on child development theories and principles. Experiences, activities, and practices reflect this by allowing children to (a) learn to deal with their own feelings and needs, and to understand and cope with those of other children and adults; (b) acquire social skills which will enable them to achieve their own purpose without violating the rights of others; (c) develop cognitive and language skills; (d) utilize and enhance developing physical skills. Children’s needs must be given the first consideration in scheduling. The program begins the moment the first child enters the door and continues until the last child leaves. Planning, preparation, and clean-up must be done within this context. Children can and should be involved in these activities as individuals or in small groups. They can help with snack and lunch preparation by getting out and putting away materials and equipment. Their involvement must be planned into the day.

Staff members must be responsible for the direction of the program from the time the children arrive. Activities must be planned for the early morning period and children must be actively supervised. This is also true in the later afternoons. At that time, the pace should be slowed and quiet activities included for tired children and adults.

Each child is to be greeted on arrival by the teacher in charge of the group at the time and spoken to on departure. Staff should make an effort to at least greet pleasantly the adult who delivers and picks up the child—without getting so involved that attention is diverted from the children.

The staff is expected to maintain harmonious interpersonal relationships and to extend to each other empathetic support. This is essential for adults who are involved in meeting the needs of young children. Adults who cannot relate to each other in this manner lack a fundamental personality characteristic for work in a center.

II. Our Mission and Goal

The mission of the Harrisonburg-Rockingham Child Day Care Center is to provide full-day childcare and learning opportunities for children in a secure and nurturing environment.

The center pledges to serve the community by providing fully licensed care to children regardless of the families’ financial resources, race, or religious affiliation. The center’s professionally trained staff will continuously foster opportunities for the child’s physical, social, emotional and intellectual growth, with the goal of supporting children to become life-long learners.

III. Center History and Affiliations

The Harrisonburg-Rockingham Child Day Care Centers, Inc., located at 281 East Market Street, was established in 1971 in response to community needs for the children of parents who work, participate in job training, or attend school. Our center is a United Way funded agency licensed by the State of Virginia, to care for up to 111 children between two and twelve years of age. Although the center is physically housed in the Muhlenberg Lutheran Church, it is not affiliated with any religious group or denomination. The Harrisonburg-Rockingham Board of Directors consists of community volunteers and parents who formally meet at least 6 times per year to set policy and general procedures. The board delegates to the center’s executive director the responsibilities for the day-to-day operations of the center.

BOARD OF DIRECTORS July 2023- 2024

Martha Ross, President

Andrea Burkholder

Julie Wallace Carr

Marsha Knott, Secretary

Diane McCarthy

Chelsey Bollinger

Irana Scott, Co-Treasurer

Daphyne Saunders Thomas

Katherine Preston

Kristen Fink, Co-Treasurer

Tilton Weaver

Holly McCartney

Noah Yoder

IV. Nutrition and Non-Discrimination

Breakfast, lunch and afternoon snacks are served every day and meet Child and Adult Food Care Program, (CACFP) requirements for nutrition.

Special diets may be arranged between parents and the center's directors. Special treats are allowed for celebrations and should be arranged in advance with the child's teachers (No presents should be brought for birthdays). Parents are welcome to join their child for lunch any day. Please notify the staff in advance so that an extra portion may be prepared.

The CACFP prohibits discrimination in all its programs and activities on the basis of race, color, national origin, sex, religion, age, disability, political beliefs, sexual orientation, or marital or family status. (Not all bases apply to all programs.) Persons with disabilities who require alternative means for communication of program information (Braille, large print, audiotape, etc.) should contact USDA's TARGET center at (202) 720-2600 (voice and TDD).

To file a complaint of discrimination, write CACFP, Director, Office of Civil Rights, Room 326-W, Whitten Building, 1400 Independence Avenue SW, Washington, DC 20250-9410 or call (202) 720-5964 (voice and TDD). CACFP is an equal opportunity provider and employer

Harrisonburg-Rockingham Child Day Care admits children of any race, religion, disability, color, national and ethnic origin to all the rights, privileges, program and activities made available to students at the center. We do not discriminate in any way within the administration of our educational policies, enrollment policies, financial plan or any other school administered program. A multi-cultural, anti-biased curriculum is offered.

V. Hours of Operation

A. Arrival and Departure Procedure

Center Opening: 7:00 a.m. Monday – Friday

When parents arrive at the center, they should park in the Muhlenberg Lutheran Church parking lot and enter through the red doors, but not before 7:00 a.m. To prevent accidents, car engines must be turned off. When parents arrive with their children, they must come into the building and sign in their child with their initials and the actual time when they arrive.

Center Closing: 5:30 p.m. Monday – Friday

When leaving, parents must initial and list the departure time on the classroom sign-in sheet. At no time is any child allowed to leave the building or playground without adult supervision. Parents are expected to pick up children by 5:30 p.m. If a parent is late in picking up a child, the following fees will be assessed:

5:31 – 5:35 \$20.00

5:35 - 5:40 \$30.00

5:40 – 5:45 \$40.00

5:45 or later will result in a \$50 fee.

If a child is left after 5:45 p.m. and the center staff has been unable to reach parents or emergency contacts, the Department of Social Services will be called for assistance.

B. Snow Closings and Late Openings

The center's director and a designated member of its board of directors will decide closings or late openings, and an announcement will be made through email, a post on Face book and the WHSV website will reflect any changes on the closing page. Unless otherwise stated, parents are responsible for payment during these weather-related delays or closings. In the event of prolonged inclement weather, the Board of Directors may consider a reduction in tuition

VI. Holidays

Parents who might have objections to recognition of religious or other holidays, such as Christmas, Thanksgiving, Easter, or Valentine's Day, should so indicate to the director so that proper arrangements can be made to respect you and your child's wishes.

Holidays: Holidays are scheduled as listed below. If one of the holidays falls on a Saturday, the center will be closed the previous Friday. If the holiday falls on a Sunday, the center will be closed the following Monday.

New Year's Day

Martin Luther King Jr. Day

Thanksgiving Day

Good Friday

Memorial Day

Christmas Day

Independence Day

Labor Day

Juneteenth

The center will be closed for a one-week winter break, for which the exact dates will be announced in September. No tuition will be charged during this week.

VII. Registration, Rates, Payments, Fees and Other Payments

A. Registration: An initial non-refundable registration fee of \$100.00 will be due upon enrollment of your child.

Parents and child shall meet with the director or assistant director to review the program, discuss our philosophy and to determine the appropriate placement. Registration must be complete before a child can attend the center.

- Registration form with two emergency contacts
- Current physical immunization records
- Directors will need to see birth certificate
- Completed USDA form
- Signed tuition and policy agreement
- Verification of income

B. Tuition is based on a sliding fee scale according to family gross income. **Tuition payment is due the first day of the week for the upcoming week. Tuition must be paid before your child(ren) can attend.** Families with more than one child at the center receive a \$25.00 discount for each additional child. **Please contact the program at hrdaycare@verizon.net or (540)434-5268 for a quote for tuition.**

In the event that our bank returns your check, you will be responsible for paying a \$50.00 charge for the returned check.

An annual activities fee of \$100 will be charged in September of each year.

C. Holding Fees

Advance notice is required for permission to pay a holding fee of 1/2 the normal weekly tuition, when the child is absent from the center for an entire week for vacation or other reasons. Full payment is expected for center holidays and when a child is absent due to illness for just part of the week. Holding fees are permitted 3 times per family per year.

Prior to taking the summer off, one week's tuition is required to hold your child's spot at the center. This deposit may be applied to the first week that your child returns and will be non-refundable if your child does not return to the center. For purposes of this section, depending upon your residency, summer can be defined as the time city or county schools close for the summer until they reopen again in the fall.

C. Written Notice: Parents are required to give two weeks notice of intention to withdraw their child. Without this notice, parents will be liable for two weeks tuition.

VIII. The Program & A Typical Day

The center aims to provide to its children many real experiences that are challenging and promote a positive self-image. Because young children learn best through active involvement in their bodies and through the senses, the daily schedule is arranged to include many opportunities for the manipulation and exploration of materials both indoors and outdoors with the same consistent care givers. Children come to understand their world through play experiences that promote curiosity, problem solving, creativity and language. Children also need to play with peers and experience relationships with caring, consistent adults to learn language, social skills and a sense of self. The space, materials, natural environment and people are all necessary parts of the setting in which the child learns through play. In addition, specifically planned activities the teachers seize the spontaneous moments and routine activities to model respect and caring and to extend children's thinking as they are engaged in casual conversations. For example, children gain independence as they learn to zip their coats when preparing to go outside. Teachers aid children as needed and give instructions and encouragement to match abilities.

The following opportunities are available at the center each day:

- Imaginative play involving dress-up clothing, puppets, etc.
- Creative expression using paints, markers, playdough or glue
- Music and movement
- Sensory experiences with sand, water, playdough, etc.
- Science and math involving pets, plants, cooking, etc.
- Manipulation of blocks, puzzles, pegboards, etc.
- Large muscle activity with climbers, tricycles, running, etc.
- Language experiences involving stories, fingerplays, poems

Typical Daily Schedule (Monday – Friday)

7:00 a.m.	Center opens
7:30 a.m.	All Classrooms are open
8:30 a.m.	Breakfast
9:00 a.m.	Rooms 5, 6 and 8 have outside play time
10:30 a.m.	Rooms 3, 7 & 10 have outside play time
11:30 a.m.	Potty time
11:45 a.m.	Lunch for all classrooms
1:15 p.m.	Rooms 3, 7 & 10 go down for nap
1:30 p.m.	All children are down for nap
3:00 p.m.	Snack time
3:30 p.m.	Rooms 5, 6, & 8 outside play time
4:00 p.m.	Rooms 3, 7 & 10 outside play time
5:15 p.m.	Rooms 5, 6 & 8 are combined in room #3 (weather depending)
5:15 p.m.	Rooms 3, 7, & 10 children are combined in room # 7 (weather depending)
5:30 p.m.	Center closes

Schedule is flexible and may change for weather changes, field trips or special visitors to the center.

Teachers plan many field trips throughout the year to enhance the child's learning experience. Many walking field trips are taken to places such as the public library, James Madison University, the Post Office, newspaper presses, electric company and flower shops. Other field trips might include a visit to a pumpkin patch, tree farm or the county fair. When school buses are used, children over 4 years old are secured in seat belts. Children younger than 4 years are required to have car seats. Teacher/student ratios are the same on field trips as in the center, but often parents are able to join the children, providing even more adult supervision.

Consistent Care Policy

The Harrisonburg Rockingham Child Day Care Center strives to provide consistent, high-quality childcare to each child. Consistent, dependable relationships are the foundation of a child's secure attachment. It provides children with consistent routines and unlimited learning opportunities, and provides families with the security of knowing their child is in a safe and nurturing environment. Each child enrolled is assigned a classroom with the same two adults. Children will receive consistent care from their providers. In the event of the absence of a provider, a qualified substitute will be available to work. The same providers are assigned to classrooms so that all children and providers will learn to know each other.

IX. Behavior Management and Discipline

The Harrisonburg-Rockingham Child Day Care Center provides children with many positive experiences. Through these experiences, children have opportunities and are encouraged to learn how to deal with their own feelings and needs, as well as to understand and cope with the feelings of peers and adults. They also acquire social skills that will enable them to achieve their own purpose in a positive way, without violating the rights of others.

The environment is designed and activities are planned so that negative behavior and conflicts are minimized. We believe that children who are busy and interested in their surroundings and are given guidance to make appropriate choices are less likely to encounter conflicts. Guidelines are stated positively, are non-punitive, and accompanied by an explanation of expectations. Adults' help children express their feelings in positive ways and encourage them to recognize and respect the feelings of others. Because children are just learning how to get along with others, share materials and attention, and problem solve in positive ways, conflicts do arise. However, the teacher is there to assist the children as needed and to resolve the conflict to the benefit and satisfaction of all.

The following developmentally appropriate guidance techniques are used when a child is having a difficult time following directions or treating others or equipment with respect:

- A. Positive Reinforcement: The child will be encouraged when he/she is demonstrating acceptable behavior.
- B. Redirection: The child is redirected to another activity and given an opportunity to try again at another time.
- C. "When.....then" Statements: A statement in which the child is encouraged to accomplish something before going on to something else. Sample: "When you finish picking up the blocks, then you can go outside."
- D. Choice Statements: A statement in which the child is encouraged to make a positive choice. Sample: "Do you want to take your nap with a stuffed animal or a book?"

Certain Disciplinary actions (Section 22 VAC 15-30-487 of the *Standards for Licensed Child Day Centers* Department of Social Services, 2012) are NEVER USED. These include physical or forceful punishment, withholding or forcing food or rest, demeaning or threatening remarks, punishments for toileting accidents, forced confinement and separation from the group so that the child is away from the hearing and vision of a staff member. Only when a child is exhibiting temper tantrum type behavior or hurting self, others or equipment will the child be separated from the group and the adult lets the child know that when he/she is ready to demonstrate acceptable behavior, the child is encouraged to join the rest of the group and try again. The adult remains within sight and sound of the child while the child is regaining control.

If a child exhibits persistent behavioral difficulties, the teacher will initiate a meeting with the family to discuss the cause of the behavior, a plan for providing positive support, and a procedure for regular communication. If the child is hurting other children, a plan for ensuring the safety of other children and staff will be developed by the teacher and the Executive Director. Additional

professional input may be sought with the permission of the Executive Director and the family. Family members are welcome to request a meeting to discuss behavioral concerns at any time. While a reasonable effort will be made to accommodate each child's individual needs, HRCDDC reserves the right to immediately terminate the enrollment of any child whose behavior becomes a threat to other children or staff or who does not respond to supervision and other intervention efforts.

Parental Concerns

Your suggestions and concerns are always welcome so that we can provide your child with the best possible care. Specific concerns should be dealt with in a timely manner in the following three step process:

- Concerns about a child's care or experiences should be mentioned and discussed as soon as practical with the staff member most closely involved (teacher, aide, or director). Any concerns about another child should be expressed to the staff member most closely involved.
- Please try to arrange a discussion at a time when the staff member can devote attention to your concern and not sacrifice childcare or supervision. The director has an open-door policy with parents and will make time to address your concerns directly or concerns not resolved in the first step, and discuss the timeline for implementing any changes. If a parent feels that a concern has not be adequately dealt with in the previous two steps, the parent may wish to contact the center's board of directors by observing these procedures:
 - A parent may phone the chair of the personnel practices committee, who will advise the parent on subsequent steps including a follow-up letter.
 - A parent should then state the concern in writing to the chair of the personnel committee who will forward a copy to the Board President. Written concerns will be most effective when they include specific information. It should always include what resolution the parent is seeking.
 - As soon as possible, the personnel practices committee will meet to discuss the concern. The committee may arrange a meeting between the parties involved to better solve the concern.
 - Within five working days from this meeting, the chair will contact the parents describing what decisions or action will be taken.

Termination of Enrollment

The Harrisonburg-Rockingham Child Day Care Center reserves the right to terminate the enrollment of any child under the following circumstances:

- **The child is causing injury to other children or adults.**
- **The child does not respond to supervision and other intervention efforts as described above.**
- **Tuition payments are not paid on the Monday prior to attendance.**
- **The child's parents/guardians fail to submit required documents or abide by program policies or procedures as described in the Parent Handbook.**

Two weeks' notice will be given to the parents in the event of termination, unless the need for termination is immediate.

X. Health and Safety Practices

- A. Toys and Equipment:** Toys will be sterilized weekly or as needed with a mild bleach solution.
- B. Fire/Emergency Drills:** Drills will be conducted monthly and recorded to be reviewed by the Harrisonburg Fire Department. Evacuation plans will be posted on the wall next to exits.

EMERGENCY EVACUATION PLAN

- 1. Get the children out**
- 2. Call 911**
- 3. Put out a small fire**

- In the event that the children need to be evacuated from Muhlenberg Lutheran Church, we will walk with the children to the Blessed Sacrament Catholic Church until parents can be reached. If there is an emergency that involves the whole downtown area, the children will be moved to the Park View Mennonite Church by Harrisonburg City buses. Parents will be notified as soon as practical of the evacuation notice.
- An emergency preparedness plan is available in the office for your review. Please ask if you would like a copy.

REPORTING OF SUSPECTED CHILD ABUSE/NEGLECT

We are required by the State of Virginia to report any and all instances of suspected child abuse. When a staff member has information or evidence of suspected child abuse, the director is informed of the concerns and the Department of Social Services is contacted with the information. The Department of Social Services will determine the action to be taken.

XI. Illnesses

Every effort will be made to keep your child healthy and safe from injury while in our care. The center will notify parents of outbreaks of contagious diseases by posting notices in every classroom. To help prevent the spread of disease, staff members are required by OSHA to wash their hands between handling children and to wear latex gloves while dealing with bodily fluids. If your child is ill with a contagious disease, please notify the center so that we can take measures to prevent the spread of illnesses. First aid kits are located in the office, gym and playground shed. A portable kit, which includes information on each child, is taken along on field trips in the event of an emergency. Accidents can occur despite the best of efforts. A medical release, which is part of the registration form, may be used in case the parents cannot be contacted in an emergency. The center does have accident insurance that may cover accidents that occur while your child is under supervision of the center. In the event of an accident, please contact the director concerning the availability of insurance coverage.

Screening: Children will be visually screened as they arrive at the facility. If a child exhibits signs of illness, it will be determined if the symptoms indicate the need for exclusion until remedied. In the event a child becomes ill and needs to be picked up; the child will be separated from the rest of the children until a parent arrives.

A. **Non-Admittance:** Your child will not be allowed to attend day care if he/she exhibits symptoms for exclusion. If your child is unable to participate in the normal activities of the daily schedule (i.e., going outside) then your child must stay home.

B. Symptoms for Exclusion:

- **Under the arm temperature of 100.4 degrees or higher**
- **Diarrhea**
- **Vomiting**
- **A draining rash**
- **Pink eye**
- **Lice or nits**

Children need to be free of all symptoms for exclusion for 24 hours without the aid of medication before being re-admitted to the program. This policy is for the protection of your child, other children and the staff.

XII. Medication

The center staff will assume responsibility for dispensing emergency medications only. A permission form obtained from the office is required to be filled out by the child's physician and parents before any medication will be administered. Medication is stored in a locked cabinet in the office. The staff member administering the medication will also sign and indicate the time that the medication was actually given to the child. Staff will not administer any medication that is outdated.

XIII. Adjustment

It is normal for your child to have some fears about being away from you. Children, like adults, need time to get used to new situations. Try to prepare your child for the changes as far in advance as possible. Discuss any concerns. Talk about some of the new people your child will meet and the new things your child will do. If you are enthusiastic, soon your child will be too.

If this is the first time your child has been separated from you, it is natural for him/her to be hesitant. A cheerful good-bye kiss, a smile, and a reassuring word that you will be back after work is all you need to do. Our caring staff will take it from there. Please do not sneak out when your child is not looking.

Communication

One regularly scheduled parent conference will be held each year (usually in February). Parents are invited to request a conference with their child's teacher during any part of the year.

The child's teacher will advise the parents when:

- **A child's behavior pattern is different than usual**
- **The child may have been exposed to a communicable disease**
- **The child has become ill or is injured**

The parents will advise the center when:

- **A child will be absent from the center**
- **A child will be absent from the center for a week or more and the parent wishes to use the holding fee option**
- **The arrival and departure time is different from usual**
- **Someone other than the parent is to pick up the child (In this case, written or telephone notice is required)**
- **A change has occurred in the family that might affect the child (separation, divorce, death, etc.)**
- **Changes have been observed in the child's behavior**
- **A child has been given medication that may cause a change in behavior**

XIV. State Licensing

The commonwealth of Virginia helps assure parents of the safety of child day care programs that assume responsibility for supervising, protecting and maintaining the well being of a child for any part of a 24-hour day. Title 63.1 chapter 19 of the Code of Virginia gives the Department of Social Service authority to license these programs. While there are some legislative exemptions to licensure, licensed programs include child day care centers, family day care homes, and child day care systems. The state may also register family day care homes not required to be licensed.

Standards for licensed child day care centers address certain health precautions, adequate play space, a ratio of children per staff member, equipment, program, and record keeping. Criminal record checks and specific qualifications for staff and most volunteers working directly with children are also required. Standards require the facility to meet applicable fire, health, and building codes.

Compliance with standards is determined by announced and unannounced visits to the program by licensing staff within the Department of Social Services. In addition, parents or other individuals may register a complaint about a program which will be investigated if it violates a standard.

Three types of licenses may be issued to programs. Conditional licenses may be issued to a new program to allow up to six months for the program demonstrate compliance with the standards. A regular license is issued when the program substantially meets the standards for licenser. A provisional license, which cannot exceed six months, is issued when the program is temporarily unable to comply with the standards. Operating without a license when required constitutes a misdemeanor, which, upon conviction, can be punishable by a fine of up to \$100 or imprisonment of up to 12 months or both for each day's violation.

If you would like additional information about the licensing of child day programs or would like to register a complaint, please contact the Valley Office of Child Care Health and Safety.

Valley Office of Child Care Health and Safety
P.O. Box 1208
Waynesboro, VA 22980
(804)921-7688

Prevention of Shaken Baby Syndrome and Abusive Head Trauma

Belief Statement

We believe that preventing, recognizing, responding to, and reporting shaken baby syndrome and abusive head trauma (SBS/AHT) is an important function of keeping children safe, protecting their healthy development, providing quality child care, and education families.

Background

Shaken baby syndrome and abusive head trauma is the name given to a form of physical child abuse that occurs when an infant or small child is violently shaken and/or there is trauma to the head. Shaking may last only a few seconds but can result in severe injury or even death. According to 8VAC20-780-40, all child care centers shall develop written procedures for prevention of shaken baby syndrome or abusive head trauma, including coping with crying babies, safe sleeping practices, and sudden infant death syndrome awareness.

Procedure/Practice

Recognizing:

Children are observed for signs of abusive head trauma including irritability and/or high-pitched crying, difficulty staying awake/lethargy or loss of consciousness, difficulty breathing, inability to lift the head, seizures, lack of appetite, vomiting, bruises, poor feeding/sucking, no smiling or vocalization, inability of the eyes to track and/or decreased muscle tone. Bruises may be found on the upper arms, rib cage, or head resulting from gripping or from hitting the head.

Responding to:

- If SBS/AHT is suspected, staff will:
- Call 911 immediately upon suspecting SBS/AHT and inform the director.
- Call the parents/guardians.
- If the child has stopped breathing, trained staff will begin pediatric CPR.

Reporting:

- Instances of suspected child maltreatment in child care and/or the home are reported to Department of Social Services. (540)574-5110

Prevention strategies to assist staff in coping with a crying, fussing, or distraught child

Staff first determine if the child has any physical need such as being hungry, tired, sick, or in need of a diaper change. If no physical need is identified, staff will attempt one or more of the following strategies:

- Rock the child, hold the child close, or walk with the child.
- Stand up, hold the child close, and repeatedly bend knees.
- Sing or talk to the child in a soothing voice.
- Gently rub or stroke the child's back, chest, or tummy.
- Offer a pacifier or try to distract the child with a toy or rattle.
- Turn on music or white noise.

In addition, the facility:

- Allows for staff who feel they may lose control to have a short, but relatively immediate break away from the children.
- Provides support when parents/guardians are trying to calm a crying child and encourage parents to take a calming break if needed.

Prohibited behaviors

Behaviors that are prohibited include (but are not limited to):

- shaking or jerking a child
- tossing a child into the air or into a crib, chair, or car seat
- pushing a child into walls, doors, or furniture