

The Growing Tree
Child Development Center, Inc.



Infant – Toddler- Preschool- Pre K – Kindergarten –School Age Programs

**Policy & Procedure Manual
for Families**

(Revised August 4, 2014)

Director/Owner: Lauren Lohr

Mission Statement

To provide the community with a model early childhood education program in which the administration, staff, and parents collaborate effectively to foster children's natural love for learning and to nurture each child's individual development.



- Introduction

The Growing Tree Child Development Center, Inc. was created in response to the need in our community for high quality early childhood education for young children and their families. The administration and staff of The Growing Tree creates and maintains an environment of stability, safety, nurturance, and play, which are essential to meet the educational, physical, and emotional needs of children and their families.

The administration and staff at The Growing Tree are highly qualified to work with children and their families. Years of education and experience in the fields of Early Childhood Education, Psychology, Child Development, and Family Studies provide a solid foundation for our model early childhood program.

The program at The Growing Tree becomes a valuable extension of each family by recognizing the parent's goals and making them an important part of each individual child experience. Staff members value the importance of strong communication between the families and staff and work to build positive relationships with every family in the program.

Location

The Growing Tree Child Development Center Inc.
106 West Point Drive Suite 4, Greensburg, Pa 15601
(724) 832-1180

- Licensure

The Growing Tree Child Development Center is licensed by the following agencies:

*The Development of Public Welfare – Child Day Care Division
1-800-222-2149

*Accredited by The Keystone Stars

- CCIS ACCEPTED

- Purpose of this Manual

The purpose of this manual is to clearly describe the policies and procedures that govern the administration of The Growing Tree's high quality early childhood program with respect to the role of the staff and families.

Infant Program

Children in the Infant Program at the Growing Tree explore the safe, stimulating, environment under the loving supervision and guidance of our infant care giving staff. Infant caregivers encourage mobility, self-awareness, communication between the child's parents and caregivers.

Toddler Program

Children learn by actively exploring their environment. The Toddler Program at The Growing Tree offers children ways to become actively involved in discovery, investigation, and play with a variety of learning materials. Our toddler classroom is well-organized and well equipped to provide experiences for toddlers in building blocks, literacy, creative arts, dramatic play, active physical play (indoor and outdoor), sensory development, and social interaction.

Each child is assigned a primary teacher to care for his/her individual needs and to develop a positive relationship with his/her family. Daily communication between the parents and staff is an essential part of the program in order for staff to become an extension of the child's family.

Preschool Program

The Preschool program brings an exciting range of learning experiences to preschool-age children. The program offers and encourages opportunities for cooperative play, positive peer interactions, the development of self-esteem, and a wide array of planned activities that spark imagination and curiosity in young learners.

The Growing Tree Preschool program uses The Creative Curriculum as a guide for planning activities for the children.

The preschool classroom is equipped to accommodate children's needs and is divided into interest areas including blocks, dramatic play, science/discovery, language arts/library, math/manipulatives, outdoor play, and computers. An art studio within the classroom allows children to create with different art media and learn to enjoy the process of art.

Our Preschool staff is educated and experienced in the field of Early Childhood Education. The preschool staff promotes the development of each child as an individual by offering "freedom within limits" in order to enhance each child's ability to problem-solve, achieve goals, and develop self-esteem. Throughout the day children have the opportunity to participate in group activities, partner play, and individual work.

Pre-Kindergarten Program

The Growing Tree Pre-K and Kindergarten programs provide families with a licensed, high-quality program in a small group setting. The curriculum of these programs include project work; individual journals; authors of the month; math concepts such as numbers, counting, adding, and sorting; reading; language arts; project related fieldtrips; science; art; physical fitness; yoga; music; and much more. The full day programs allow more time for the children to ask questions, make discoveries, and encourages independence.

Suggested prerequisites for the Pre-K classroom

Students must:

Be potty trained, be able to recognize at least half of the alphabet, be able to recognize numbers 1-10, be able to spell their first name, be starting to practice their address and parents' names and be prepared to try new things.

Private Kindergarten available on an as needed basis year to year.

**PLEASE INFORM US IF YOUR CHILD HAS AN IFSP OR AN IEP.
PLEASE PROVIDE A COPY FOR THE OFFICE.**

FAMILY INVOLVEMENT

The Growing Tree Child Development Center is founded on the belief that continuity between the home and the early childhood environment is essential for the child's optimal development.

Frequent written and verbal communication between the staff and families allows parents and staff to form strong partnerships and work for each child.

We encourage families to attend holiday events and "special activities." Families are invited to be guest readers, bring in pets, volunteer at holiday parties and much more.....

- **Open Door Policy**

The program at The Growing Tree has an open door policy, inviting and encouraging parents to visit the program during the day to observe their children.

Parents are welcome to call the center at any time to inquire about their child's health, behavior, mood, progress, etc. Whenever possible, a parent may speak directly to the child's teacher or the director at anytime.

- **Classroom Information Boards**

Each group has a “What we did today” parent board which has classroom information for the families of the children in the group. Teachers write about the day’s activities. Parents and families are encouraged to read the information board in the child’s classroom at pick-up time each day.

- **Activity/Lesson Plans**

Weekly lesson plans are developed for each group of children, including activities, themes, projects, and special events. Copies of lesson plans are posted each week in every group so that parents can discuss what the children are learning in school and have the opportunity to work at home on skills which are also being worked on at school. If parents wish to have a copy at home, please ask one of the teachers.

- **Quarterly Newsletter**

A monthly newsletter is compiled by the Director with input from the staff, children, and families. The newsletter includes center news, reminders, and events.

- **Parent- Teacher Conferences**

Every family is given the opportunity to have a conference within 30 days of enrollment to discuss comments, progress, observations, and/or concerns.

Parent- Teacher Conferences are held twice a year for all age-groups in November and April/May.

Developmental assessments are completed based on the teacher's recorded observations of each child. The parent's are given a questionnaire prior to the conference to let the teacher know about their questions and concerns. The parent's, as well as the teacher's, concerns are addressed at the conferences. A written progress report is given to parents at each conference.

- **Cooperative Meetings**

Cooperative meetings between parents and staff regarding specific incidences, behaviors, and concerns can occur at any time throughout the year. Appointments are recommended and may be requested by the parent and/or the teacher.

- **Enrollment Procedures**

Initial Visit & Tour of the School

Families are encouraged to bring their children in prior to enrollment for an "introduction day". This time allows children and family members to become more familiar with the staff, other children, and the daily classroom schedule. During the introductory session families may come for a few more on one day or come a few different times for shorter periods. The child and family members may participate in any of the activities taking place

throughout the classroom and are encouraged to explore the classroom and ask questions of the Director and staff.

Within the first month of a child's enrollment, a brief meeting between the Director or primary teacher and the family takes place to discuss the **"Enrollment Interview Questionnaire"**.

- **Waiting List**

If there is not available space for a child or family in a classroom, a waiting list is formed. Families on the waiting list are notified if space becomes available based on the order in which they were put on the list, AS WELL AS their identified scheduling needs and the age of their child.

- **Enrollment Packet**

The following forms are included in the enrollment packet:

Emergency contact/parental consent form

Financial agreement

Excursion/sunscreen/diaper cream form

Intake interview

Food plan (infant room)

Child Health assessment

Notes: The initial health form **MUST** be signed and dated by a doctor and returned within 30 days enrollment

Health forms are required as per PA DPW regulations and the American Academy of Pediatrics at the following ages:

*** At least every 6 months until the child is 2 years of age.

*** At least every 12 months for a child 2 years of age and up.

If your child currently has an IEP or IFSP, please give a copy to the director if possible.

- **Immunization Records**

It is the responsibility of the parent to make sure a child's immunizations are up to date prior to and throughout enrollment at the center of the health of their own children and the other children at the center.

The entire enrollment packet is due before the child's first day in attendance at the center.

- **Transfer of Records**

At the parent's request, a child's academic records may be transferred to another educational setting. In addition, a child's permanent record is sent to a child's Kindergarten or First Grade at the request of the School District or Private School.

- **Referral Plan for Services**

The following procedure is followed to refer a child for mental health, social, developmental, educational, behavioral, and/or health/medical services.

1. A letter is given to the parent/guardian regarding the staff member's and Director's concerns about the child's behavior, development, and/or progress.
2. A conference/cooperative meeting is scheduled with the parent(s)/guardian(s) to discuss these concerns.
3. Parents/Guardians are provided with phone numbers and contact information for the appropriate services (mental health, social development, educational, behavioral, health/medical) at the time of the cooperative meeting.
4. Follow-up cooperative meeting are scheduled as necessary throughout the process of evaluation, diagnosis, and obtaining services.
5. Staff members from The Growing Tree participate in meetings with family and referral agencies as much as possible. If possible, meetings occur at the center to involve more staff and to be able to incorporate the school environment/resources into the plan for the child.
6. The individualized plan/IFSP/IEP for the child is shared with the staff members who care for the child. A copy of the plan becomes a part of the child's file.
7. The Growing Tree staff complete reports/observation logs as required by the agencies or at the request of the family or Director to monitor the child's progress within the classroom.

- **Withdrawal/Dismissal of a Child**

If a family needs to withdraw a child for any reason from the center, we require a **TWO WEEKS NOTICE**, including two weeks of tuition. The two weeks of tuition is due whether or not the child attends the center during the two week notice period.

The Director of The Growing Tree may dismiss a child or family from the program for the following reasons:

1. Consistently late tuition payments. A letter will be sent home prior to dismissal to give the family a chance to bring their account to a \$0 balance or to be aware of our tuition payment policies.
2. Excessive late pick-ups after child's contracted pick-up time (a letter will be sent home prior to dismissal so that the family has a chance to work on the problem).
3. Child's behavior continually poses a threat to the safety of the children and/or staff members or is excessively disruptive to the classroom environment and interferes with other children's learning experience.
4. If the dangerous or disruptive family refuses to cooperate with staff regarding the issue, a letter giving 1-2 weeks notice for the child's dismissal will be sent home.

- **Operating Policies and Procedures**

Monday – Friday

7:00 – 5:30

Year-around

Each family is given 2 vacations weeks per year. Half of tuition is due for these weeks.

- **Holidays/School Closings**

The Growing Tree is **CLOSED** on the following days and holidays:

If the holiday falls on your scheduled day tuition is still due.

(except our holiday break no tuition is due)

New Years Day

Good Friday (Friday before Easter)

Memorial Day

Fourth of July

Labor Day

Thanksgiving Day

Friday after Thanksgiving

Christmas Eve through New Years Day

12/24- 1/1 (WINTER BREAK) NO TUITION DUE

There will be NO tuition adjustments made for closed holidays or days off due to illness and personal reasons. EXCEPTION: NO payment is due for WINTER BREAK or any emergency closing of the center due to weather or other emergencies.

We are unable to “switch days” due to scheduling reasons. If you cannot attend on your scheduled day tuition is still due. You may add days if necessary anytime, providing there is room for your child in his or her classroom.

Summer holding fees will be charged for families who are NOT enrolled in our summer program. This will hold your child’s spot for the school year.

- **Emergency Closings**

For weather closings please watch WTAE (Channel 4) or WPXI (Channel 11) . A recorded message will also be available on the center’s voice mail after 6:00am

(724) 832-1180

- **Transportation**

Transportation for all children is the responsibility of the parents. **Parents may assign alternate authorized pick-up persons** for their children on the “Emergency Contact/Parental Consent” form. Parents and authorized pick-up persons must follow the “**Safe Drop-off / Pick-up Procedure**” posted at the front entrance. If a person other than the parent is picking up a child, the center **MUST HAVE VERBAL OR WRITTEN PERMISSION FROM THE PARENT** (even if the person is listed on the contact form)

- **Personal Belongings (ALL ITEMS MUST BE LABELED)**

Personal belongings for a child should be limited to an extra set of clothes, backpack (for Preschool, Pre- K, and Kindergarten), lunchbox, coat, blankets or bedroll for nap time, and if **necessary** ONE security item to sleep with at nap. Toys from home should not be brought in to school except for “Show and Share” days.

For Show and Share, educational toys or toys based on the monthly or weekly themes of the classroom are preferred.

BOOKS FROM HOME ARE ALWAYS WELCOME ANY DAY!

Toys with weapons or toys which promote violence in any form will NOT be permitted at The Growing Tree. **NO EXCEPTIONS.** At the teacher or Director’s discretion, unsuitable toys will be taken to the Director’s office to be picked up by the parent at the end of the day or locked in a closet until pick-up time.

No item which is not suitable for ages under three should ever be brought in to the infant or toddler classrooms, even if it is a “security “item for a child. Toys with small parts (for example, small cars, dolls with small accessories or parts, ect.) pose a choking hazard for all the children. These toys may not even be kept in the child’s cubby. If unsafe toys are brought in, the parent will be asked to take them with them at drop- off time or the toy will be locked up in a closet for safety reasons.

One of the goals in all of our classrooms is to teach a sense of “community”. The Growing Tree is well-equipped with an

array of toys which are shared by our school community. There is no need for additional toys from home to be brought in on “non-‘show and share’ days”. This policy is to prevent a child’s personal toys from being broken or “claimed” by another child.

- **Video/Television**

The developmentally appropriate curriculum at The Growing Tree is a hands-on approach to learning which requires a child’s mind and body to be actively involved in the classroom environment. Therefore, The Growing Tree staff limits passive activities like television viewing.

Rare exceptions occur if a video or program is used to enhance the children’s knowledge of a particular topic which will be incorporated with additional developmentally appropriate activities. In addition, once or twice a year a “pajama party” is planned to celebrate a holiday and the children may watch a short G-rated program taped from TV with popcorn in their pajamas and slippers.

Federal copyright laws prohibit the use of copyrighted videos outside the home. However, videos of our families and children are always welcome, such as family vacations, dance recitals, etc. The viewing of these “special” videos can increase a child’s self-esteem and allow a child’s friend to

learn more about the child's family and the life outside the school.

- **Pets**

Classroom pets provide a valuable hands-on learning program opportunity for children. Children are able to learn about animals by actively participating in the care of the classroom pets, recording their own observations, creating meaningful drawings of the animals, and sharing the wonder of the animal world with their teachers and friends.

Pets in the classroom may include birds, fish, rabbits, hamsters, frogs, lizards, and other appropriate animals. Any allergies to classroom pets will warrant a replacement of the pet for a more suitable pet for ALL of the children. Any fears of the pets will be acknowledged and no child will be forced to participate in any pet activities.

Families may offer to donate a pet to the center with the Director's permission. Any help with the care of the pet's greatly appreciated.

Dogs and cats are welcome to be visitors on special occasions ONLY if they are accompanied by the child's parent and the veterinarian's certificate of the pet's current vaccinations.

- **Birthday /Special Celebrations**

Children are welcome to celebrate their birthdays at The Growing Tree by bringing in a special healthy snack and/or game to share

with their friends. Parents should talk to the child's teacher about any allergies in the child's group before bringing in a snack. Every effort must be made to bring in a healthy snack like pretzels, veggies and dip, fruit tray, muffins, or bite size yellow or white cup cakes. Large cupcakes will be cut into small pieces to be shared. No foods containing chocolate, large amounts of sugar, nuts or peanut butter may be brought in due to the possibility of allergies.

- **Meals**

PLEASE KEEP IN MIND WE ARE A PEANUT FREE FACILITY. ABSOLUTELY NO PEANUT PRODUCTS WILL BE GIVEN TO THE CHILDREN. IF YOUR CHILD IS SENT TO SCHOOL WITH PEANUT PRODUCTS IN LUNCH, PRODUCTS WILL BE SENT BACK HOME AND PARENTS WILL BE NOTIFIED.

The Growing Tree provides the following meals and snacks:

1. Breakfast
Served 7:30 -8:30am
Unsweetened cereal, milk, and juice
2. Morning Snack
Served sometime between 9:30 and 10:30
Fruit or vegetable and milk
3. Afternoon Snack
Served between 3:00 and 4:00 bread product and juice

The Growing Tree provides Vitamin D or 2% Milk for lunch but the LUNCH is provided by the parents. All items in a child's lunch should be clearly labeled with a permanent marker or labels. Lunch

items can be heated by our staff. Please place all cold items in cold bin in the morning.

Please check with the director on classroom allergies. Peanut products are BANNED at the center due to large amount of children with the peanut allergy.

Please make every effort to support our nutrition goals and policies for children. Desserts/treats sent in the lunch should be limited and will be sent home in the lunch box and not served to the children if there are too many or the rest of the lunch has not been eaten first.

All items requiring refrigeration should be placed in the refrigerator cold bin located in each classroom. **It is the responsibility of the parent to make sure every item is labeled with the child's name/ initials and refrigerated as necessary. Items placed in the refrigeration bin should be limited to dairy foods, meats, and perishables.**

- **Summer School Age Program**

During the summer months from the first week of June through August, The Growing Tree offers a Summer School Age program for families in need.

Space in the school- age summer program is limited. Spaces are reserved on a first- come basis. Please drop a note to the Director to express interest in the program in early spring.

Before and after school care is now available. You may use The Growing Tree for school age children's bus stop. Please make arrangements with your local school.

- **Sick Policy**

The Growing Tree Child Development Center facility shall temporarily exclude a child or send the child home as soon as possible if one or more of the following conditions exist:

- a) The illness prevents the child from participating comfortably in activities as determined by the child care provider;
- b) The illness results in a greater need for care than the child care staff can provide without compromising the health and safety of the other children as determined by the child care provider;
- c) The child has any of the following conditions:
 - 1) Fever (101 degrees or higher), accompanied by behavior changes or other signs or symptoms of illness until medical professional evaluation finds the child able to be included at the facility;

CHILD MUST BE FEVER FREE WITHOUT MEDICATION FOR 24 HOURS.

- 2) Symptoms and signs of possible severe illness until medical professional evaluation finds the child able to be included at the facility. Symptoms and signs of possible severe illness include
 - lethargy that is more than expected tiredness,
 - uncontrolled coughing,
 - inexplicable irritability or persistent crying,
 - difficult breathing,
 - wheezing, or
 - other unusual signs for the child;
- 3) Diarrhea, defined by more watery stools, decreased form of stool that is not associated with changes of diet, and increased frequency of passing stool, that is not contained by the child's ability to use the toilet. Three watery stools will result in a phone call from the teacher
- 4) Vomiting illness (two or more episodes of vomiting in the previous 24 hours) until vomiting resolves or until a health care provider determines that the cause of the vomiting is not contagious and the child is not in danger of dehydration
- 5) Persistent abdominal pain (continues more than 2 hours) or intermittent pain associated with fever or other signs or symptoms;
- 6) Mouth sores with drooling, unless a health care provider or health department official determines that the child is noninfectious;
- 7) Rash with fever or behavior change, until a physician determines that these symptoms do not indicate a communicable disease;

- 8) Purulent conjunctivitis (defined as pink or red conjunctiva with white or yellow eye discharge), until after treatment has been initiated. In epidemics of nonpurulent pink eye, exclusion shall be required only if the health authority recommends it;
- 9) Pediculosis (head lice), one week after the first treatment.
- 10) Scabies, until after treatment has been completed.
- 11) Tuberculosis, until a health care provider or health official states that the child is on appropriate therapy and can attend childcare
- 12) Impetigo, until 24 hours after treatment has been initiated;
- 13) Strep throat or other streptococcal infection, until 24 hours after initial antibiotic treatment and cessation of fever.
- 14) Varicella-Zoster (Chickenpox), until all sores have dried and crusted (usually 6 days).
- 15) Pertussis, until 5 days of appropriate antibiotic treatment (currently, erythromycin, which is given for 14 consecutive days)
- 16) Mumps, until 9 days after onset of parotid gland swelling;
- 17) Hepatitis A virus, until 1 week after onset of illness, jaundice, or as directed by the health department when passive immunoprophylaxis (currently, immune serum globulin) has been administered to appropriate children and staff members.
- 18) Measles, until 4 days after onset of rash;
- 19) Rubella, until 6 days after onset of rash;
- 20) Unspecified respiratory tract illness.
- 21) Shingles (herpes zoster);
- 22) Hand, foot, & mouth virus (1 week removal from care)

Or any other medical conditions that arise.....

Throughout the years as an illness is diagnosed in a child at the center, “fact sheets” about the specific illness are copied and distributed to each family to add to the health folder. Family members should refer to the health folders for information if their child exhibits symptoms or if the child needs medication during the child care hours or if the family member has a question about a health- related topic or policy.

- **Illness and Injury Tracking**

An illness and injury log kept in the Director's office to track the spread of illness and the frequency of injuries at the center.

- **Incident Reports**

If a child is injured at school, an "Incident Report Form" is completed by the child's teacher or by the teacher who cared for the injured child.

At pick-up time the parent signs the incident report and receives a copy for the child's records at home. Another copy of the report becomes part of the child's file at school.

- **Hand washing**

Hand washing is the most important way to limit the spread of illness and infection in the child care and school setting.

The Growing Tree staff and children are trained to follow this procedure for hand washing while singing our ABC's:

ALWAYS:

Wash your hands with soap
and water in between your
fingers, and under your nails
and on the tops and palms
To make germs disappear!

Wash hands at these times...

- Upon arrival and after breaks
- After toileting /diapers
- Before serving food or eating
- Before & after administering medication

- After wiping bodily fluids
- After being outside
- When moving to another classroom
- After removing used gloves

- **Health Consultant**

The Director of The Growing Tree consults occasionally and whenever necessary with a health consultant/nurse with the Early Childhood Education Linkage System (ECELS). ECELS provides information to early childhood center about illnesses and other health and safety issues.

- **Outside Play**

Children are taken outdoors when weather permits in the morning and afternoon. **Please pick your child up at the double doors to avoid tripping hazards.**

- **Medication Administration**

- **SUNSCREEN “ “**

- **DIAPER CREAMS “ “**

Medication must be directly handed to the teacher in the room followed by a medication log form filled out by the parent.

Please do not leave medications in your child’s lunch bags or

back packs. All medication must be in its original container, have written instructions (i.e. label), labels must have the child's name and the name of medication, and not be expired.

Additional policy reminders and changes will be sent home in the form of a letter to each family on an as needed basis.

Thank you for helping us to maintain our policies. They were developed to keep you child safe and healthy within the school environment.

**We welcome you to
The Growing Tree Family!**

**I have read and understand the Policy and
Procedure Manual for Families.**

Signature

Date

The Growing Tree

-Toddler- Preschool- Pre K – Kindergarten –School Age Programs