



# SANTA FE CENTERS

## PARENT HANDBOOK

Revised October 2023

*Please note that any information found in the appendix related to COVID-19 specific procedures supersedes what is found in the standard handbook when state requirements are implemented to manage illnesses safely.*

I acknowledge that I have read and reviewed the parent handbook.

\_\_\_\_\_  
Name

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

# Contents

## MISSION STATEMENT & PHILOSOPHY

### ABOUT US

- Our Vision & Our Team
- Teacher/Child Ratios

### PROGRAMS

- Infant Toddler Center
- Pre-K Center

### ADMISSION PROCESS

- SFC Admission Policy
- Wait List
- Registration Fee
- Security Deposit
- Tuition
- Late/Improper Payments
- Child's File, Policy on Parental Notification

### PICK UP & DROP OFF

- Infant/Toddler Center
- Pre-K Center
- Sign-In & Sign-Out
- Security Codes
- Late Fee
- Attendance
- Center Closings

### HEALTH & SAFETY POLICIES

- Health Records
- Illness
- Lice Guidelines
- Medication
- Outside Time
- Lunches and Snacks
  - Infants
  - Mobile Infants and Older Children
- Birthdays
- Toys from Home
- Arrival & Departure Safety

### TOILET TRAINING POLICY

### BITING/AGGRESSIVE/BEHAVIOR

### GUIDELINES ON POSITIVE DISCIPLINE

### INFORMATION TO PARENTS/DEPT. OF CHILDREN AND FAMILIES

### POLICY ON MANAGEMENT OF COMMUNICABLE DISEASE

### POLICY ON RELEASE OF CHILDREN

### EXPULSION POLICY

### TECHNOLOGY AND SOCIAL MEDIA POLICY

### APPENDIX A: Santa Fe Outdoor Play Policy

### APPENDIX B: COVID 19 Protocols and Procedures

## **Santa Fe Centers Mission Statement**

Our mission is to provide a high quality, supportive, family-centered program for young children in a warm, safe and responsive environment. Children are actively engaged in a variety of play and daily living experiences, which are designed to:

- Promote their physical, social, emotional and cognitive development;
- Encourage cooperation, responsibility and consideration of others based on age appropriateness and within reasonable expectations.

Our philosophy is based on the principle that children learn most effectively when they can explore and discover using materials that are of interest to them.

## Philosophy

Your child's safety, developing self-confidence and sense of competence and enjoyment of their day is the primary mission of Santa Fe Centers. We meet the developmental needs of our growing children and their families by providing a safe, nurturing and stimulating setting for children from infancy through Kindergarten.

The environment we provide for children in each classroom is based on current early childhood research, theory and developmentally appropriate practice noting that children learn best when they can explore and discover using materials that are of interest to them. In practical terms, this allows children to be appreciated as individuals capable of directing their growth through an environment offering daily choices in self-directed play, ample exposure to nature, and opportunities to develop higher level thinking and problem solving with an array of toys, games, equipment and caring teachers guiding their daily experiences.

Through the use of thematic units in each classroom, teachers provide activities supporting development in the following domains: sensory, language and vocabulary, large and small motor, creative expression and music and literature enjoyment. The flexible curriculum meets the needs of children at each stage of development and awakens the child's innate ability to "bloom" at their own pace. Active learning experiences are available in the following interest areas: sensory (including food experiences), blocks, dramatic play, art, and math and science. By frequent changes to and enrichment of the environment throughout the year coinciding with the growth of the children, teachers support learning and creativity while simultaneously facilitating emerging literacy, math, science, and social studies concepts through developmentally appropriate care.

Parent participation is encouraged in all Center activities including our parent/staff committee, classroom activities, Center-wide holiday events, or spur of the moment opportunities to spend time with your child in their classroom. Through open communication and positive parent/teacher partnership, a child's developing self-esteem, social skills, creativity, independence, self-care and a life-long passion for learning can be fully supported.

## ABOUT US

### Our Vision

Santa Fe Centers is dedicated to providing sensory activities that current early childhood education research shows is essential to building the neural connections necessary for optimal growth.

Whether through manipulating novel materials and textures; enjoying the scents of foods; moving to music; conversing and problem solving with teachers and friends; or observing colors and patterns; to taking walks in strollers; using push toys or riding scooters; climbing and running; or sledding down a hill children at Santa Fe have the opportunity to explore and grow actively using their whole body and all of their senses. We will continue to advocate for children both at Santa Fe and the community.

### Our Team

Our teachers at Santa Fe are experienced, responsible and caring adults who share our belief in the importance of helping the development of the whole child and have experience in caring for children in a childcare environment. Our staff are screened and carefully selected. Several of our teachers have earned their CDA (Child Development Associates) Credential and many have a degree in Early Childhood Education. Our orientation for new staff includes Santa Fe's philosophy as well as our vision and mission statement. Team members receive ongoing training to continue their education and are evaluated throughout the year. Training ranges from basic safety and health information to topics such as discipline and a variety of child development issues. CPR/First Aid certification is provided to our staff on a continuing basis.

### Teacher/Child Ratios

To ensure quality care Santa Fe maintains optimal teacher/child ratios in order to provide for developmentally appropriate supervision. This allows the staff to spend more time with each child and provides a relaxed and warm atmosphere for the children. Where and when possible, Santa Fe always adheres to mandated state ratios while striving to continually achieve 'better-than-state-ratios' depending on staff experience and tenure. Please see the ratios below:

| <b><u>Age Group</u></b>  | <b><u>New Jersey</u></b> | <b><u>Santa Fe</u></b> |
|--------------------------|--------------------------|------------------------|
| Young and Mobile Infants | 1:4                      | 1:3                    |
| 18 months – 2.5 years    | 1:6                      | 1:5                    |
| 2.5 – 3.5 years          | 1:10                     | 1:8                    |
| 3.5 – 5 years            | 1:10                     | 1:8                    |
| 4 – 5.5 years            | 1:12                     | 1:10                   |
| 5+ years                 | 1:15                     | 1:12                   |

## Programs

Each of our Centers has a wonderful outdoor playground tailored to the developmental levels of the children we serve. An important aspect of our program that we consider to be part of our 'DNA' is outdoor play. The children go outside twice a day whenever the weather permits. The children spend their days involved in hands-on learning activities as they explore the world around them and experiment with a wide range of available materials and equipment. Visits from foreign language, vocal music and exercise specialists are included in our programs.

### Infant Toddler Center - 1441 Springfield Avenue

Our goal at the Infant Toddler Center is to provide the children with a 'home-away-from-home', family-like atmosphere where they can spend their days in a loving, relaxed manner. We work closely with families to provide a satisfying schedule for your child to ensure their optimal growth in all developmental spheres.

Our program includes neighborhood walks, music and story time, mirror play & tummy time. Our toddlers are actively exploring their environment and our teachers offer a variety of child directed activities as well as opportunities to practice their developing new skills. Children enjoy exploring sensory play experiences such as playing with sand, water & painting.

### Pre-K Center - 1496 Springfield Avenue

Our program curriculum provides opportunities for social, emotional, physical and intellectual growth at all age levels. There are three classrooms at our Preschool. The individual classrooms are structured around a variety of learning centers including art, music/movement, building, sensory, science and math. Each is organized to encourage individual and group choices.

The Center provides activities for the learning of readiness skills including numbers, letters, and colors, writing and using scissors. Our goal is for each child to gain competence in the areas of self-reliance, self-regulation and self-esteem.

## Admission Process

### Santa Fe Centers Admission Policy

Children are accepted on a first-come, first-served basis according to the amount of space available. We encourage families to come for a Tour of our Centers. Our tours are usually scheduled for the mornings from Tuesdays through Thursdays. Siblings of currently enrolled students may be given first priority on our list. For inquiries about our Centers, please email us at either [santafechildcarecenters@gmail.com](mailto:santafechildcarecenters@gmail.com) or [mcliffordsfc@gmail.com](mailto:mcliffordsfc@gmail.com) or submit an inquiry directly from our website [santafecenters.com](http://santafecenters.com)

### Prospective Enrollment List

Families interested in having their child attend Santa Fe are encouraged to visit our Centers and request to be added to our Prospective Enrollment List. There is a \$50.00 **non-refundable fee**. This will give you priority for when you are ready to enroll your child. It is always best to visit the Center in the interim. Our intent is to serve as many families as we can in a safe, efficient manner and we take placement very seriously to ensure that we can provide developmentally appropriate care. If we can accommodate you, we will extend an offer to your family which families can respond to in kind.

### Registration

If you would like to register your child please fill out the Registration Form. There is a **non-refundable Security Deposit** due at the time of registration in the amount of \$500 for full time and \$250 for part time families. The Security Deposit will be applied to your last month at the Centers, provided that you give us at least four weeks' notice. It is always best to visit the Centers, however, there is a Registration Form available on our website which can be submitted online if you prefer. In the event of a mandated closure or prolonged shutdown (greater than two weeks) due to circumstances beyond the control of Santa Fe (e.g. government mandated closure due to pandemic, etc.), we reserve the right to return deposits to requesting families on a staggered, 'as-needed' basis or opt to keep the Security Deposit in full for the best interest of the operational status of our Centers.

### Tuition

Tuition is expected to be paid monthly. Payments are due the 1<sup>st</sup> of the month. If either date falls on a weekend or holiday, please pay prior to that date. Payments may be left in the mail boxes at either Center. You will receive an invoice via email several days before the end of the prior month in which the payment is due. It is our policy not to allow any reduction in the fee or credit for day's missed because of your child's absence from the child care center; this includes absences due to sickness, holidays, vacations, quarantines, etc.. Please note, tuition for the month is non-refundable. If it is necessary or required to close a classroom or the Center as a whole due to 'acts of god' (i.e. power outage, inclement weather, etc.) or illness (i.e. COVID-19), Santa Fe will not provide any partial refunds or credits for that month. This is because we have carefully aligned our classrooms with a daily focus on child/teacher

ratios and need to adhere to such guidelines based on planned attendance and limited to no 'switching'. It is also how we can support our long-tenured staff and keep up with the rising costs associated with both typical and new protocols for our Centers. There is a cost-of-living review every year with the potential for a subsequent increase in tuition at any point.

Please make your checks payable to "Santa Fe Child Care Centers" and write in the memo section the time period for which you are paying (i.e. September 2021). We provide invoices each month and at the end of the year to submit for dependent care accounts or tax purposes. If you would like to receive monthly statements, please indicate this on your enrollment form.

## Late/Improper Payments

Payments which are consistently late will receive an automatic \$50 late fee added to the next month's payment. Payments need to be received less than 10 days after their due date. If a check is returned to us, due to insufficient funds, we will require you to reimburse the child care center for any incurred bank fees or penalties. In addition, you must replace this payment immediately, or the automatic late fee will apply.

## Child's File

It is the State's policy to keep your child's file at our Center for one year after leaving us. Santa Fe does not allow copies of your information to leave the Center.

## Santa Fe Centers - Policy on Parental Notification

Please review the following as defined in our Parent "Enrollment Policies" and in our Parent's Handbook

## Communication with Parents

Communication with parents is primarily done through email and/or text. Please make sure you provide us with an email address and cell phone number that you check frequently. If you do not have access to email or a cell phone, please speak with the director/assistant director/office manager to ensure that you receive notices promptly. If we have not reached you by email/cell phone, we will utilize alternative methods discussed based on the aforementioned meeting with our staff. The REMIND app has been implemented at the Centers and is being used by our Teachers and Management to share events and happenings in your child's classrooms and also to relay timely information due to inclement weather conditions which may affect our families and staff while at Santa Fe Centers. Please contact your child's teacher for sign-up information.



## Pick Up & Drop Off

If you want your child to be picked up by someone other than you or your spouse, please fill out an alternate pick-up form. A blanket form can be filled out for those individuals who will be frequently picking up your child. We cannot let anyone pick up your child who has not been specifically designated to do so by a parent. If the staff is not familiar with the individual picking up your child, PLEASE have this person bring picture identification.

### Infant/Toddler Center

Children must be dropped off and picked up through the rear of the building only. Enter the church property off Springfield Avenue (on the west end of the church), drive to the side of the building, and park in the rear parking lot. You *cannot* park on Springfield Avenue or in the circular drive at the front of the building. The parking lot *cannot* be entered from the rear off Holmes Oval. It is a condition of our use variance from the Borough of New Providence and Union County that traffic only enter/exit via Springfield Avenue and only park in the rear parking lot. We *must* abide by this condition and we need all the parents' cooperation. Failure to comply will be sufficient reason for us to dismiss your child from the Centers. A traffic flow and parking lot map will be included in the enrollment package prior to starting at either Center.

### Pre-K Center

Children in either the Butterflies or the Caterpillars program should enter through their respective welcome doors. Children attending the Pre-K program should use the side entrance. Ring the doorbell step back to our window(s), and a staff member will proceed downstairs to welcome your child to the classroom.

### Sign-In & Sign-Out

Please sign your child in and out of the classroom every day on the daily sheet. This is a state requirement. Do not allow children to run in the building or the parking lot unsupervised once you have picked them up. Once you have arrived on site, you are responsible for your child. The staff is no longer considered responsible at that point.

### Security Codes

Please note: The use of specific security codes for families to enter the building have been cancelled. Parents can set up a classroom visit or tour whenever it is convenient for all involved. If we opt to reinstitute code entry, the immediate family of each child will choose a code to allow keypad entry into the building of their child's attendance. This unique code should be guarded for everyone's security. Extended family members and emergency contacts on record needing entry may ring the bell and be let in by a staff member upon visual identification. There is a space on your enrollment form to indicate

your choice of a four digit security code. Your code should be something you will easily remember, however, please do not choose obvious numbers (1234, for example). Birthdates, anniversaries or phone numbers are common choices. This code should not be given out to your children.

When entering your code on the keypad next to the entrance of each Center, please carefully enter each number. Do not use the # sign. The door will unlock, however, it will not swing open, and you may not be able to hear anything. The door at the Infant Center unlocks for about 20 seconds to allow parents time to get young children inside. The door at the Preschool Center remains unlocked for approximately 10 seconds.

## Late Fee

### ***Late Fee Policy:***

*A late fee is charged when a child remains after their typical pick-up time. Late pick-up fee of \$10 from 3:45pm-4:00pm and \$20 after 4:00pm.*

*The late fees for after 6:00pm closing remain the same and are as follows: \$10 – 6:00-6:05 pm; \$20 – 6:06-6:20pm; and \$30 – 6:21-6:30 pm.*

Any late fee goes directly to paying the person who stays with your child.

## Attendance

We expect that parents bring their children to the Center by 9am. It is quite disruptive to the routines of all the classrooms to have children arriving late each morning. We understand that there will be times when this is impossible or you are just running late. In those instances we ask that you call us at: 908-464-3848 or email [mcliffordsfc@gmail.com](mailto:mcliffordsfc@gmail.com) for the Pre-K Center. Please call 908-665-1235 or email [mcliffordsfc@gmail.com](mailto:mcliffordsfc@gmail.com) at the Infant Toddler Center so that we know your child will be attending and we are staffed accordingly in his/her room. If your child will be absent for the day, please contact us as well.

## Center Closings

There are a number of reasons why we may close the Centers; inclement weather, electrical outages or severe illness. Administrative staff will communicate operational status as information becomes knowingly available via email and our Remind app. Unanticipated and sporadic closings are anticipated to occur throughout the year and we will make every attempt to serve our families by remaining open, however, if the safety of the staff or children are in jeopardy and the decision to close is made on this basis, we do not allow for reimbursements and/or credits as our monthly costs (staff wages, utility bills, janitorial services, etc.) are relatively consistent on a monthly basis and required to be maintained for long-term operational purposes.

## Changes in Schedule

Any increase in schedule (in number of days attended) will require at least **one month's** notice to go into effect. Additionally, if a part time schedule is required, days must be coordinated with the Director. Certain days may not be available. Changes in days attended may require a wait if space is not immediately available. **If you wish to withdraw your child from the Center for a large block of time, we will need to require a tuition fee to hold your space.** As you can imagine, we need to meet our expenses and this involves keeping our full time staff and paying our overhead (rent plus other expenditures). You are welcome to take your child out and take the chance that we would be able to accept him/her back into the classroom. Our policy for holding spots for your children over the summer is to require 50% of the tuition or to ask the family to drop down to 2-3 days a week. **We just cannot guarantee placement without a tuition payment.**

## Health & Safety Policies

**(PLEASE see Appendix for current COVID19 procedures)**

### Health Records

All children are required to have a complete physical and their vaccination record should be up to date. All families need to submit an immunization record and a Universal Child Health Record prior to their start date. **According to State guidelines, a new Universal Child Health Record form needs to be completed every year when your child has their annual physical.** Your physician signs off on this form and dates it. In addition, separate vaccination records should be filled in and signed by your doctor when new vaccinations are administered.

### Illness

Parents must have alternate care for their children when they are sick. A child who is contagious (i.e. severe cold, strep throat, conjunctivitis, etc.) should remain at home **at least 1-2 days** after *consulting with your physician*. Do not bring children who have had fevers of 101.5\*, vomiting, or diarrhea within the past 24 hours. Once a child is symptom free for over 24 hours (without fever, diarrhea, vomiting, etc.) or a health care provider indicates that the child poses no serious health risk to himself or herself or others, the child may return to the Center. We are very strict about this in order to stop the spread of infection. The Director will be the determining factor if there are questions regarding your child's return to the Center.

If your child has strep pharyngitis, the child needs to be on antibiotics for 24-48 hours and without fever for 24 hours before he or she returns to school. **PLEASE remember you must bring a note from your doctor stating that your child can return to school. Your child cannot come to the Centers if he or she does not have a note.**

If a child becomes ill while at the Center, we will make every attempt to notify you immediately. We ask that you have constant access either to a regular phone, cell phone, or email where we can reach you in case of illness or emergency. Children who are suspected of having a contagious illness or a high fever will be separated from the class, or kept in the office until they are able to be picked up. **We ask that someone be available to pick up sick children within one hour of being contacted.**

## Lice Guidelines

In order to limit the spread of lice, we need your help. Below, please find information to assist you in preventing/eliminating any infestations and, hopefully, preventing the spread to other children.

- PLEASE let us know if your child has lice. Obviously, it came from somewhere so there is nothing to be embarrassed about. Many experts believe lice actually prefer clean hair. Having lice is not associated with poor hygiene. It's important that we know so that we can notify other families before it spreads, potentially re-infesting your child even after you've treated him/her. Also, notify any children that your child was in close contact with prior to an infection. At the point at which you see live lice, your child was most likely infected for approximately three weeks and contagious only for the last week or so.
- When you know that lice is circulating in the child care centers, in your other children's schools or among friends, you should check your child(ren) *at least* once a week thoroughly. If your child has long hair or has been in close contact with an infected child, you may want to check daily.
- "Checking" requires more than just a glance at your child's head. To check thoroughly for eggs and nits, you should wet your child's hair, apply conditioner and comb through the hair with a special lice comb, available in drug stores. After each run through, wipe the comb on a white paper towel and look for eggs, which are usually tan or brown and no larger than the periods on this paper. Obviously if live lice are found, or clusters of white nits very close to the scalp (resembling dandruff), those are also signs of infection. This thorough check needs only to be done once a week if you find nothing. You can check dry hair daily and do this on the weekends for three weeks.
- Most experts agree that lice treatment should be focused on the hair, not the environment. Lice only live 1-2 days off of a person's head, so anything not touched for that period is ok. You don't need to spray chemicals around your house or sanitize the entire house. You should however:
  - Wash bedding and recently worn clothing in hot water and/or drying on high for 20 minutes.
  - Place things like stuffed animals or clothing that can't be washed in a sealed bag for 2-3 days
  - Vacuum couches/car seats or other places where heads may be resting.
- Keep long hair in ponytails or pig tails during any period when lice has been reported
- Don't share hats, brushes, combs, jackets, etc.
- PLEASE check everyone in your household, but do not treat anyone who doesn't have a confirmed case of lice; this only exposes them unnecessarily to chemicals and possibly creates more resistant cases.

- Insecticidal treatments targeted at de-lousing of the classroom furnishings, contents, etc. will not be done since this is not a proven effective means of eliminating infestations, however, we will do all we can to inform our families and render safe our classrooms.

Of course we want to do everything we can to prevent this spreading at school so we are:

- Checking all the children's heads at the preschool center. However, this is not a substitute for checking at home. We obviously cannot wet hair and take the time to do thorough checks. If a nit is found, your child will be sent home. **WE WILL REQUIRE ALL CHILDREN TO BE NIT FREE.**
- Washing all items that can be cleaned in hot water.
- Removing certain dress up clothing, like hats, which are particularly likely to spread any signs of infestation;
- Helping children with long hair to keep it tidy and up while at school.
- Keeping families updated and letting you know when we have any reported cases.

For additional information, we refer to the guidelines/information provided by the CDC, FDA, & Mayo Clinic.

## Medication

We administer over the counter and prescription medication if needed. All medicine administered by the child care center needs to be clearly labeled in its **original container** with the child's name and the dosage. A non-prescription form needs to be signed by the parent. In addition, we administer nebulized medications (usually for asthma or reactive airway disease). Families will be asked to provide a nebulizer machine that can be used to provide inhaled medication as well as sterile tubing and a mask or mouthpiece. A permission for administration of prescription medication form needs to be completed and signed by a doctor before we give any medicine to your child. ***We will not be able to administer medicine if the above procedures are not followed.*** Please note – administering medicine to children is a courtesy provided by Santa Fe. If you require a Prescription or a Non-Prescription form, please access from our website under forms.

In the event a Santa Fe family comes to our staff with an allergy plan for their child which would necessitate an Epi-Pen, our staff would be required to ask you to bring in a set of two (2) Epi-Pens to have on-hand for your child in their respective classroom. Any allergy plan for your child would need to be accompanied by a note from your physician's office with the prescribed protocol along with the form we have on hand – 'Permission for Administration of Prescription Medication'.

## Outside Time

We require extra sets of clothing for each child appropriate to the season and size labeled with their names. We require all of our children to go outside on a daily basis. Each Center will provide you with an outside chart as a guideline. If you feel your child should not go outdoors, you will need to make arrangements to keep your child out of the Center for the day. All children need to wear supportive footwear to encourage their active play outdoors. Please see Appendix A

## Lunches and Snacks

**WE DO NOT ALLOW ANY PEANUT OR NUT PRODUCTS AT EITHER CENTER DUE TO LIFE THREATENING ALLERGIES.** We take this seriously, so we require full disclosure of food sensitivities as we provide cooking/food experiences within most classrooms.

We have microwaves available in each room to warm the children's food. We ask that you bring your child's food in microwaveable containers so that we do not need to use additional paper plates. We are working hard to keep the Centers as "green" as possible. In fact, part of our curriculum speaks to caring for the planet we live on.

### Infants

We have a refrigerator in the infant room. Each infant has their own basket in the refrigerator, and a separate basket to store dry cereal and jarred food. Opened jarred food will be thrown out after two hours; formula will be discarded one hour after being first fed. Please place any items needing refrigeration in your infant's basket in the morning. All infant bottles must be pre-mixed and already in feeding bottles. Mixed or opened formula should not be stored for more than one day. Please be sure to label each bottle. And please note, at the Infant Center, all food needs to be brought home each night.

### Mobile Infants and Older Children

Please provide lunch and snacks. These should be kept in an insulated bag with an ice pack. There is no space for the older children to refrigerate their meals. Milk, or other perishable items, will be thrown out immediately to prevent spoilage if they are not consumed.

Please bring enough food to include two snacks a day. We expect parents to provide enough food choices for their child. The snacks should be varied and nutritional. Fruits and vegetables are encouraged. Trying new foods is a challenge for children at times and we will cheerfully present your choices to them at appropriate times. As your children mature, they become increasingly responsible for setting up their lunches and cleaning their areas. When transitioning from a bottle, please provide a container with a straw type of opening. This excludes sippy cups as they do not provide the opportunity to use more of their oral muscles for the development of speech. At the Pre-K Center, children require a water bottle with a tight closing lid daily to help them maintain hydration.

## Birthdays

Birthdays can be celebrated here at the Centers. Parents often bring in a special snack. The children enjoy these celebrations very much. We ask that “goodie bags” not be brought to the Centers. If you are sending home invitations for a party, through the Center, every child in the class must be invited. However, please note that for privacy reasons, the Centers cannot share family email addresses with you. Parents will typically use the Remind app to reach out to other classmates and get their contact information.

## Toys from Home

We encourage you to keep toys at home. If your child brings a toy into the child care it is best that s/he puts it in their basket or cubby right away. It is very difficult for the children to share their special toys and this creates many problems. **We cannot be responsible for any toy brought from home.** Nap toys (soft animals or dolls only) can be kept in the child’s basket or cubby for naptime use. In addition, we ask that no jewelry be brought to the Centers.

## Arrival & Departure Safety

When arriving or leaving the Centers please drive **slowly** as you enter the driveways – children are always present. You are expected to **STOP** when you see a **STOP** sign. Do not leave cars left idling while dropping off your child. In the State of New Jersey, idling your car is an offense punishable by law. **Please hold your child’s hand when walking in the parking lots and ensure that your child walks along side of you.** As you leave the Centers, adults should open the door of the school and hold their child’s hand. Please allow yourself enough time to pick up and drop off your child.

## Toilet Training Policy

Before you begin the process of “Potty Training” you must first communicate with your child’s lead teacher. It is necessary for home and school to work together to achieve success with a minimum amount of related stress. The purpose of toilet training is to help children gain control of their body functions. Children must be ready to participate willingly if the process is to be a positive one. The child is ready when he or she is consistently dry for long periods during the day, awakening after a full night’s sleep and when awakening from naps. If the child is ready, the process of toilet training can become a sign of great success and achievement for the child’s own sense of self-esteem.

Toilet accidents are a normal aspect of a child’s potty training process. Toilet learning/training is not instant nor is it accomplished overnight. Achievement is gradual and requires calmness, patience, and understanding. When accidents occur clean up calmly, and reassure them that next time they will remember to use the potty. Children should not be shamed, scolded or punished for accidents.

Regression is common in toddlers and can usually be attributed to a reaction to stress and pressures the child is experiencing (i.e. separation from parents, a new baby, starting child care, moving, etc.).

To help your child with this process Santa Fe requires that:

- Children have four sets of weather appropriate clothing (shirt, pants, underwear, socks, etc.) and an extra pair of shoes.
- Children wear clothing that is easy to remove in a hurry. A child must be ready to act on an urge to use the potty immediately.
- Avoid tight snaps, coveralls, belts, buttons, and onesies. Velcro fasteners are ideal.
- Children move directly from disposable diapers to cloth underpants (we do not use pull-ups).
- Children arrive and leave wearing underpants daily.
- A commitment to consistent use daily at home and on the weekends.

If your child has an accident, we will remove the clothing from the child and put directly into a plastic bag if reasonable (we will not rinse them due to sanitation restrictions). You will need to check daily for bags that need to be taken home for laundering.

Common toileting times are:

- Before and after snacks and lunch
- Before and after playground time
- Before and after rest time
- When the child has the urge

If after a trial period your child significantly regresses, we would possibly recommend putting your child back into diapers.

Is your child ready?

If you and your child are ready, please download, sign and print the toilet training policy form and return it to your child's lead teacher.

## **Biting / Aggressive Behavior**

Toddlers between the ages of 1-2 ½ years occasionally bite and/or display aggressive behavior as a result of physical discomfort from teething or emotional frustration. Although it may seem primitive or more aggressive than hitting or grabbing, biting is a natural behavior for very young children. They do not have the social awareness and understanding or empathy for their peers' feelings in order for them to control their behavior. In addition, young children have a limited ability to analyze their feelings and communicate frustrations through language. Children at any child care center are faced with new social



situations that may bring out biting or other behaviors never experienced before. We will occasionally see the 3 to 4 year old child also bite or behave aggressively in frustration or anger, and we will work closely with that child in an age appropriate manner.

Santa Fe strives to provide a comfortable environment that will decrease the possibility of biting or other behavior problems by maintaining a small adult to child ratio in addition to organizing activities and supervising children's interactions. However, when young children are grouped together, occasional aggressive behavior such as biting or pushing is inevitable. In the event of a biting incident or aggressive action such as hitting or pushing, our staff proceeds with the following course of action:

- Immediate separation of children involved in incident.
- The bite wound is cleaned and an appropriate treatment will be provided.
- A cool-down period for the aggressive child equal to one minute for each year of the child's age (i.e. 2 minutes for a 2 year old child).
- Documentation of the incident in an accident report records the details including the date, time, and children involved; influencing circumstances witnessed by staff, as well as first aid measures that was taken.

Each child will be talked to gently at the level of their understanding with the emphasis being how your friends feel as well as how you feel when you hurt someone. If biting or other aggressive behavior is persistent in a child, the staff will observe and assess the child's behavior and then, meet with the parents to discuss correcting the problem at home and at school. An assessment of the child's behavior and influential circumstances will help determine the external causes of the child's frustration and provide a basis for planning a behavior-correcting strategy with the parents. Santa Fe strives to work with parents as a team, in order to leave no child behind in his or her social development.

Therefore, a child who has persistent aggressive behavior may need to take a break from school for a designated period of time, after repeated occurrences, in order to change his or her surroundings. Parents may also be invited to spend some time with the child at school in order to support the child's inclusion among his or her peers. Given that each child has his or her own unique needs, each situation will be handled on a case-by-case basis.

Our intent is to help eradicate this behavior as soon as we can but this may necessitate getting help from the child's pediatrician or other professional experts. At rare times, we may need to encourage the family to look for childcare elsewhere, if we are not able to assist with this challenge.

## **Guidelines for Positive Discipline**

Positive discipline is a process of teaching children how to behave appropriately. At Santa Fe Centers positive discipline respects the rights of the individual child, the group, and the adult. Methods of positive discipline shall be consistent with the age and developmental needs of the children, and lead to the ability to develop and maintain self-control.

Positive discipline is different from punishment. Punishment tells children what they should not do; positive discipline tells children what they should do. Punishment teaches fear; positive discipline teaches self-esteem.

You can use positive discipline by planning ahead:

- Anticipate and eliminate potential problems.
- Have a few consistent, clear rules that are explained to children and understood by adults.
- Have a well-planned daily schedule
- Plan for ample elements of fun and humor.
- Include some group decision-making
- Provide time and space for each child to be alone.
- Make it possible for each child to feel he/she has had some positive impact on the group.
- Provide the structure and support children need to resolve their differences.
- Share ownership and responsibility with the children. Talk about our room and our toys.

Positive discipline includes intervening by staff when necessary:

- Re-direct children to a new activity to change the focus of the child's behavior.
- Provide individualized attention to help the child deal with a particular situation
- Use time-out – by removing a child for a few minutes from the area or activity so that he/she may gain self-control. (One minute for each year of the child's age is a good rule of thumb).
- Divert the child and remove from the area of conflict.
- Provide alternative activities and acceptable ways to release feelings.
- Point out natural or logical consequences of children's behavior.
- Offer a choice only if there are two acceptable options.
- Criticize the behavior, not the child. Do not say "bad girl"; instead say "That is not allowed here."

You can use positive discipline by showing love and encouragement:

- Catch the child being good. Respond to and reinforce positive behavior; acknowledge or praise to let the child know you approve of what he/she is doing.
- Provide positive reinforcement through natural rewards for good behavior.
- Use encouragement rather than competition, comparison or criticism.
- Overlook small annoyances and deliberately ignore provocations.
- Give hugs and caring to every child every day.
- Appreciate the child's point of view.

- Be loving -- but don't confuse loving with license.

Positive discipline is NOT:

- Disciplining a child for failing to eat or sleep or for soiling themselves
- Hitting, shaking, or any other form of corporal punishment
- Using abusive language, ridicule, harsh, humiliating or frightening treatment or any other form of emotional punishment of children
- Engaging in or inflicting any form of child abuse and/or neglect
- Withholding food, emotional responses, stimulation, or opportunities for rest or sleep
- Requiring a child to remain silent or inactive for an inappropriately long period of time

***Positive discipline takes time, patience, repetition and the willingness to change the way you deal with children. But it's worth it, because positive discipline works.***

## DEPARTMENT OF CHILDREN AND FAMILIES:

### INFORMATION TO PARENTS

Under provisions of the **Manual of Requirements for Child Care Centers (N.J.A.C. 3A:52)**, every licensed child care center in New Jersey must provide to parents of enrolled children written information on parent visitation rights, State licensing requirements, child abuse/neglect reporting requirements and other child care matters. The Center must comply with this requirement by reproducing and distributing to parents this written statement, prepared by the Office of Licensing, Child Care & Youth Residential Licensing, in the Department of Children and Families. In keeping with this requirement, the Center must secure every parent's signature attesting to his/her receipt of the information.

Our Center is required by the State Child Care Center Licensing law to be licensed by the Office of Licensing (OOL), Child Care & Youth Residential Licensing, in the Department of Children and Families (DCF). A copy of our current license must be posted in a prominent location at our Center.

To be licensed, our Center must comply with the Manual of Requirements for Child Care Centers (the official licensing regulations). The regulations cover such areas as: physical environment/life safety; staff qualifications, supervision, and staff/child ratios; program activities and equipment; health, food and nutrition; rest and sleep requirements; parent/community participation; administrative and record keeping requirements; and others.

Our Center must have on the premises a copy of the Manual of Requirements for Child Care Centers and make it available to interested parents for review. If you would like to review our copy, just ask any staff member. Parents may secure a copy of the Manual of Requirements on the DCF website at <http://www.nj.gov/dcf/providers/licensing/laws/CCCmanual.pdf> or obtain a copy by sending a check or money order for \$5 made payable to the "Treasurer, State of New Jersey", and mailing it to: NJDCF, Office of Licensing, Publication Fees, PO Box 657, Trenton, NJ 08646-0657.

We encourage parents to discuss with us any questions or concerns about the policies and program of the Center or the meaning, application or alleged violations of the Manual of Requirements for Child Care Centers. We will be happy to arrange a convenient opportunity for you to review and discuss these matters with us. If you suspect our Center may be in violation of licensing requirements, you are entitled to report them to the Office of Licensing toll free at 1 (877) 667-9845. Of course, we would appreciate your bringing these concerns to our attention too.

Our Center must have a policy concerning the release of children to parents or people authorized by parents to be responsible for the child. Please discuss with us your plans for your child's departure from the Center.

Our Center must have a policy about administering medicine and health care procedures and the management of communicable diseases. Please talk to us about these policies so we can work together to keep our children healthy.

Our Center must have a policy concerning the expulsion of children from enrollment at the Center. Please review this policy so we can work together to keep your child in our Center.

Parents are entitled to review the Center's copy of the OOL's Inspection/Violation Reports on the Center, which are available soon after every State licensing inspection of our Center. If there is a licensing complaint investigation, you are also entitled to review the OOL's Complaint Investigation Summary Report, as well as any letters of enforcement or other actions taken against the center during the current licensing period. Let us know if you wish to review them and we will make them available for your review or you can view them online at [https://data.nj.gov/childcare\\_explorer](https://data.nj.gov/childcare_explorer).

Our Center must cooperate with all DCF inspections/investigations. DCF staff may interview both staff members and children.

Our Center must post its written statement of philosophy on child discipline in a prominent location and make a copy of it available to parents upon request. We encourage you to review it and to discuss with us any questions you may have about it.

Our Center must post a listing or diagram of those rooms and areas approved by the Office for the children's use. Please talk to us if you have any questions about the Center's space.

Our Center must offer parents of enrolled children ample opportunity to assist the Center in complying with licensing requirements; and to participate in and observe the activities of the Center. Parents wishing to participate in the activities or operations of the Center should discuss their interest with the Center Director, who can advise them of what opportunities are available.

Parents of enrolled children may visit our Center at any time without having to secure prior approval from the director or any staff member. Please feel free to do so when you can. We welcome visits from our parents. Our Center must inform parents in advance of every field trip, outing, or special event away

from the Center, and must obtain prior written consent from parents before taking a child on each such trip.

Our Center is required to provide reasonable accommodations for children and/or parents with disabilities and to comply with the New Jersey Law against Discrimination (LAD), P.L. 1945, c. 169 (N.J.S.A. 10:5-1 et seq.), and the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA), P.L. 101-336 (42 U.S.C. 12101 et seq.). Anyone who believes the Center is not in compliance with these laws may contact the Division on Civil Rights in the New Jersey Department of Law and Public Safety for information about filing an LAD claim at (609) 292-4605 (TTY users may dial 711 to reach the New Jersey Relay Operator and ask for (609) 292-7701), or may contact the United States Department of Justice for information about filing an ADA claim at (800) 514-0301 (voice) or (800) 514-0383 (TTY).

Our Center is required, at least annually, to review the Consumer Product Safety Commission (CPSC), unsafe children's products list, ensure that items on the list are not at the Center, and make the list accessible to staff and parents, and/or provide parents with the CPSC website at <http://www.cpsc.gov/Recalls>. Internet access may be available at your local library. For more information call the CPSC at (800) 638-2772.

Anyone who has reasonable cause to believe that an enrolled child has been or is being subjected to any form of hitting, corporal punishment, abusive language, ridicule, harsh, humiliating or frightening treatment, or any other kind of child abuse, neglect, or exploitation by any adult, whether working at the Center or not, is required by State law to report the concern immediately to the *State Central Registry Hotline*, toll free at (877) NJ ABUSE/ (877) 652-2873. Such reports may be made anonymously. Parents may secure information about child abuse and neglect by contacting: DCF, Office of Communications and Legislation at (609) 292-0422 or go to [www.state.nj.us/dcf/](http://www.state.nj.us/dcf/).

## Policy on the Management of Communicable Diseases

If a child exhibits any of the following symptoms, the child should not attend the Center. If such symptoms occur at the Center, the child will be removed from the group, and parents will be called to take the child home.

- Symptoms of COVID-19 – see appendix
- Severe pain or discomfort
- Acute diarrhea
- Episodes of acute vomiting
- Elevated oral temperature of 101.5 degrees Fahrenheit
- Lethargy
- Severe coughing
- Yellow eyes or jaundiced skin
- Red eyes with discharge

- Infected, untreated skin patches
- Difficult or rapid breathing
- Skin rashes in conjunction with fever or behavior changes
- Skin lesions that are weeping or bleeding
- Mouth sores with drooling
- Stiff neck

Once the child is symptom-free, or has a health care provider's note stating that the child no longer poses a serious health risk to himself/herself or others, the child may return to the Center unless contraindicated by local health department or Department of Health officials.

#### **EXCLUDABLE COMMUNICABLE DISEASES**

A child or staff member who contracts an excludable communicable disease may not return to the Center without a health care provider's note stating that the child presents no risk to himself/herself or others.

Note: if a child has chicken pox, a note from the parent stating that all sores have dried and crusted is required.

If a child is exposed to any excludable disease at the Center, parents will be notified in writing.

#### **COMMUNICABLE DISEASE REPORTING GUIDELINES**

Some excludable communicable diseases must be reported to the health department by the Center. The Department of Health's Reporting Requirements for Communicable Diseases and Work-Related Conditions Quick Reference Guide, a complete list of reportable excludable communicable diseases, can be found at: [http://www.nj.gov/health/cd/documents/reportable\\_disease\\_magnet.pdf](http://www.nj.gov/health/cd/documents/reportable_disease_magnet.pdf).

## **Policy on the Release of Children**

Each child may be released only to the child's parent(s) or person(s) authorized by the parent(s) to take the child from the Center and to assume responsibility for the child in an emergency if the parent(s) cannot be reached.

If a non-custodial parent has been denied access, or granted limited access, to a child by a court order, Santa Fe Centers must receive documentation to that effect, maintain a copy on file, and comply with the terms of the court order.

If the parent(s) or person(s) authorized by the parent(s) fails to pick up a child at the time of the Center's daily closing (6:00pm), we shall ensure that:

1. The child is supervised at all times;

2. Staff members will attempt to contact the parent(s) or person(s) authorized by the parent(s); and
3. An hour or more after closing time, and provided that other arrangements for releasing the child to his/her parent(s) or person(s) authorized by the parent(s), have failed and the staff member(s) cannot continue to supervise the child at the Center, the staff member will call the **24 hour State Central Registry Hotline 1-877-NJ-ABUSE (1-877-652-2873)** to seek assistance in caring for the child until the parent(s) or person(s) authorized by the child's parent(s) is able to pick up the child.

If the parent(s) or person(s) authorized by the parent(s) appears to be physically and/or emotionally impaired to the extent that, in the judgment of the director and/or staff member, the child would be placed at risk of harm if released to such an individual, the Center will ensure that:

1. The child may not be released to such an impaired individual;
2. Staff members attempt to contact the child's other parent or an alternative person(s) authorized by the parent(s), and
3. If the Center is unable to make alternative arrangements, a staff member shall call *the 24-hour State Central Registry Hotline 1-877-NJ-ABUSE (1-877-652-2873)* to seek assistance in caring for the child.

For school-age child care programs, no child shall be released from the program unsupervised except upon written instruction from the child's parent(s).

**OOL/POLICY ON THE RELEASE OF CHILDREN/APRIL2017**

## Expulsion Policy

Unfortunately, there are sometimes reasons we have to expel a child from our program either on a short term or permanent basis. We want you to know we will do everything possible to work with the family of the child(ren) in order to prevent this policy from being enforced. The following are reasons we may have to expel or suspend a child from this Center:

Immediate causes for expulsion

- The child is at risk of causing serious injury to other children or himself/herself
- Parent threatens physical or intimidating actions toward staff members
- Parent exhibits verbal abuse to staff in front of enrolled children

Parental actions for child's expulsion

- Failure to pay/habitual lateness in payments
- Failure to complete required forms including the child's immunization records

- Habitual tardiness when picking up your child
- Verbal abuse to staff
- Disregard for safety rules of facility: parking and speeding rules

#### Child's actions for expulsion

- Failure of child to adjust after a reasonable amount of time
- Uncontrollable tantrums/angry outbursts
- Ongoing physical or verbal abuse to staff or other children
- Excessive biting

#### Schedule of expulsion

If after the remedial actions above have not worked, the child's parent/guardian will be advised verbally and in writing about the child's or parent's behavior warranting an expulsion. An expulsion action is meant to be a period of time so that the parent/ guardian may work on the child's behavior or to come to an agreement with the Center. The parent/guardian will be informed regarding the length of the expulsion period. The parent/guardian will be informed about the expected behavior changes required in order for the child or parent to return to the Center. The parent/guardian will be given a specific expulsion date that allows the parent sufficient time to seek alternate child care (approximately one to two weeks' notice depending on risk to other children's welfare or safety). Failure of the child/parent to satisfy the terms of the plan may result in permanent expulsion from the Center.

#### **A child will NOT be expelled if a Parent/Guardian:**

- Made a complaint to the Office of Licensing regarding a Center's alleged violations of the licensing requirements.
- Reported abuse or neglect occurring at the Center.
- Questioned the Center regarding policies and procedures.
- Without giving the parent sufficient time to make other child care arrangements.

#### **Proactive actions that can be taken in order to prevent expulsion**

- Staff will try to redirect child from negative behavior
- Staff will reassess classroom environment, appropriateness of activities, supervision.
- Staff will always use positive methods and language while disciplining children.
- Staff will praise appropriate behaviors.
- Staff will consistently apply consequences for rules.
- Child will be given verbal warnings.



- Child will be given time to regain control
- Child's disruptive behavior will be documented and maintained in confidentiality.
- Parent/guardian will be notified verbally.
- Parent/guardian will be given written copies of the disruptive behaviors that might lead to expulsion.
- The director, classroom staff and parent/guardian will have a conference(s) to discuss how to promote positive behaviors.
- The parent will be given literature or other resources regarding methods of improving behavior.
- Recommendation of evaluation by professional consultation on premises
- Recommendation of evaluation by local school district child study team

OOL/EXPULSION POLICY/APRIL2017

## **Technology & Media Policy**

At Santa Fe Centers, we strive to be an electronics free center to the highest degree possible that we can limit use to the bare minimum given the backdrop. Use of technology by staff is centered entirely around work-related issues (i.e. communication with parents). Additional information on our programs can be found online at [www.santafecenters.com](http://www.santafecenters.com), on Facebook @SantaFeChildCareCenters, and through the use of our closed circuit app 'Remind'. Any breaches of the use of technology & media on these platforms must be reported to the Centers' Director promptly.

- Parent posting(s) of photographs or videos of children (other than your own) is prohibited.
- Posting of private or sensitive company, staff, or family-related information is prohibited.
- Parent/Staff communications will be maintained on a professional level via our Remind app, email, and business line phones. Professional boundaries are more easily maintained by limiting parent/staff communications to center sites (i.e. email or our closed circuit Remind app for primary means of communication and classroom updates). Such communications include, but are not entirely limited to: illness/injury/accidents, daily updates, photographs of classroom activities, requests for records or supplies, community updates, etc.
- Staff use of social media or other personal sites is prohibited while children are being supervised. Vulgar language, inappropriate photos, and disparaging remarks and/or targeting on any technology platforms is prohibited at our Centers.
- Devices such as mobile phones and iPads are used by center staff to the degree this enables open lines of communication with our families. Center-owned tablets may be used for educational purposes with the children on a very limited basis (i.e. online books, songs, & reading) with the express point of offering a supportive and educational classroom environment.

## APPENDIX A

| Temperature Feels Like<br>(with Wind Chill/Humidity) | We Will ...   | With   |
|--|---|--|
| Below 10°  | Stay inside   |  |
| 10° - 20°  | Go outside for a shortened time                                     | Hats and Mittens<br>(snow pants and boots if the ground is snowy or wet) |
| 20° - 32°  | Go outside for our regularly scheduled time                         | Hats and Mittens<br>(snow pants and boots if the ground is snowy or wet) |
| 32° - 50°  | Go outside for our regularly scheduled time                         | Warm Coat, Hats and Mittens  |
| 50° - 65°  | Go outside for our regularly scheduled time                         | Long Sleeves or Light Jacket   |
| 65° - 85°  | Go outside for our regularly scheduled time                         | Short Sleeves and/or Shorts  |
| 85° - 95°*   | Go outside for a shortened play time or do water play in the summer | Hats/Sunglasses and Sunscreen;<br>Water available                        |
| 95° - 100°   | Stay inside or do water play for a shortened time                   | Hats/Sunglasses and Sunscreen;<br>Water available                        |
| 100°+  | Stay inside   |  |

- Families are required to provide the following items each day for outdoor play: hat/hood, gloves/mittens (2 pairs is best), warm coat with working closure), socks at least ankle high, snow pants and boots for snow play, bathing suit and towel for water play.
- Label each item with your child's name or initials before bringing to school.
- Parents are responsible for dressing their child appropriately and providing appropriate outerwear and sunscreen.
- All children will go outdoors, however, there may be limitations in their participation in the activities occurring outdoors due to inappropriate clothing.
- These are general guidelines and may be adjusted at the Director's discretion. Changes in weather (hot or cold) may require us to make adjustments to our guidelines based on other conditions such as air quality, wind chill, humidity.

## APPENDIX B



### **Guidance for Santa Fe Childcare Centers On COVID-19 Related Health and Safety Requirements As of October 2023**

At Santa Fe Centers, the health and safety of our families, children and staff are our highest priority. We will continue to stay in communication with local and state authorities regarding guidance related to COVID-19. As part of this commitment to all of our families and staff, we will continue to:

- Promote healthy hygiene practices
- Intensify cleaning, disinfection, and ventilation
- Limit sharing of children's belongings
- Train all staff
- Monitor health and maintain healthy operations.

It is critical that we remain flexible, monitor and communicate all available developments & policies from local authorities, and work together as a childcare center and home network to keep us all safe and healthy. The specific procedures are always subject to change based on the safety and input of staff and families as well as directives from local/state/federal authorities.

Following are the SUPPLEMENTAL health procedures we have put in place specifically to address COVID-19. These will be invoked as required in addition to our standard guidelines which have always been in practice. Please be mindful that all health & safety protocols regardless of whether specifically set forth below adhere to the guidance put out by CDC and the NJ Department of Health (NJ DOH) related to Public Health recommendations. Any update to specific parameters set forth by CDC and NJ DOH recommendations supersede these protocols. We also require adherence to recommendations for Operating Child Care Centers, not the guidance for public schools. As an organization dealing with regulatory bodies with whom we consult regularly, we will need to and want to show that we are doing all we can in our policies to be consistent, mitigate risk, and keep our preschool and community safe.

This is a working document; we will continue to remain current as government policies evolve. And, please note, for the ease of daily routines and for the ongoing cleanliness and health of our facilities, Santa Fe will continue to operate with family drop off/pick up routines at the door. This only applies to our daily morning/evening routine as we still maintain an 'open door policy' for our parents who are always welcome to schedule time to see the classroom or meet with staff.

#### Most Recent Guidance: Test To Stay (TTS) Protocol

The most relevant new guidance related to COVID-19 is what the state refers to as 'Test To Stay' (TTS) for children 2 years and older. This allows asymptomatic individuals who meet the criteria for quarantine to continue in-person learning and care. TTS protocol will be implemented for children who meet the criteria:

- Do not have any signs or symptoms of COVID-19
- Are not a household contact of a COVID-19 case
- Are able to wear a mask while at the program based on current state guidelines (exceptions eating, drinking, sleeping)
- Follow TTS protocols and testing protocols

#### Drop-off/Arrival Procedure to Help Prevent COVID-19 from Entering the Building

- Before arrival, we ask that all parents are on alert for any symptoms of COVID-19 and to keep their child(ren) home if showing any signs of illness.
- **For now, parents/guardians are not allowed to enter the building during routine drop offs or pick-ups, and we will limit direct contact with parents as much as possible.** All children will continue to enter their classroom directly at the door to the classroom (*not the main entrance*):
  - **ITC:** Infants to infant room, Cuddly Cubs II to the door in front of the church closest to that classroom and Munchkins to the Munchkin room. We encourage parents not to congregate together at drop off and pick-up.
  - **Pre-K Side:** Caterpillars to the back door by the garden, Butterflies to the usual front door and Pre-K/K to the usual side door by the playhouses. We encourage parents not to congregate together at drop-off and pick-up.
- All parents will meet a teacher at the assigned door to greet their child and walk them in as they arrive or receive them for pick up. Adult masking is optional for drop off and pick-up.

- Hand hygiene stations will be set up at each entrance so that parents and children can clean their hands upon arrival. Children will then be escorted into their classrooms and conduct hand washing procedures (soap & water for 20 seconds) per our typical protocols.
- Sign-in sheets will be available at the door to mark attendance and screen for COVID. Children will continue to have temperatures taken upon drop off using our contactless thermometer and parents will fill out any required symptom screening forms, however, it is incumbent upon our families to routinely check their children every morning for multiple signs of illness before arrival at our Centers.

*\*Fever is determined by a thermometer reading 100.4 or higher. Exclusion criteria applies to children in childcare with the following: at least **two** symptoms to include fever 100.4, chills, shivers, muscle aches, headache, sore throat, nausea or vomiting, diarrhea, fatigue, congestion or running nose; OR at least **one** symptom to include new or worsening cough, shortness of breath, difficulty breathing, new olfactory disorder, new taste disorder. For children with chronic illness, only new or symptoms worse than baseline should be used.*

*\*\*Exposure is sharing a household or having close contact with anyone with COVID 19 or has symptoms of COVID 19.*

- Staff temperatures will also be taken each morning.
- Drop off and Pick-up will be at the same door.

### Group Sizes and Social Distancing

- Classroom sizes will adhere to the recommended capacity limitations when necessary. Classes shall continue to operate as distinct groups (cohorting) as much as possible with limited mixing when feasible.
- At nap time, mats will be spaced out as much as possible, ideally the mandatory distance apart or head-to-foot depending on state guidelines. We ask that you take their bedding home once a week for cleaning.
- Outdoor time will be prioritized and maximized while playtime on shared playgrounds will be minimized when feasible. We are so lucky to have such a wonderful outdoor play space - we will be sure to maximize it!
- Masking for staff and children will be considered optional when not required by the local or national government. Staff and families will make the personal decision regarding masking while the childcare facility reserves the right to adjust the protocol based on elevated community transmission, active outbreaks, returning from isolation or quarantine, and

when illness consistent with COVID-19 afflicts them in the classroom setting until they are able to leave the premise.

### Activities

- Children’s belongings will continue to be kept separated per our policies and sent home each day for washing as needed.
- To continue to keep our classrooms as clean as possible, we are still not allowing visitors to enter the building during operating hours with the exception of emergency/Essential personnel in their official capacity, the Department of Children and Families and persons providing emergency repair services that cannot be reasonably delayed until the center is closed.

### Healthy Hygiene and Ongoing Health Monitoring in the Buildings and Classrooms

- While we always practice healthy hand hygiene, we think it is important to reiterate that all children and staff will follow the guidance of washing hands frequently with soap and water for at least 20 seconds (about as long as it takes to sing “Happy Birthday” twice). Hand washing will be required at the follow-times:
  - Arrival to the center and after breaks
  - Before and after preparing food or drinks
  - Before and after eating or handling food, or feeding children
  - Before and after administering medication or medical ointment
  - Before and after diapering
  - After using the toilet or helping a child use the bathroom
  - After coming in contact with bodily fluid
  - After playing outdoors
  - After handling garbage
- We will follow NCDHHS Environmental Health Section guidance for cleaning and disinfection recommendations, with a particular focus on washing toys, doorknobs, light switches, countertops, chairs, cubbies, and playground structures.
- Windows will be open as often as possible to keep fresh air circulating.
- We will clean and disinfect surfaces multiple times a day and will assess all toys and manipulatives to ensure they are easy to clean and sanitize. Some sensory play items will remain on hold (e.g., rice, beans, sand, playdough).

- We will continue to offer more opportunities for individual play and solo activities that focus on fine motor skills (e.g., drawing, cutting, puzzles).
- For younger children, we will maintain a designated bin for separating mouthed toys and maintain awareness of children's behaviors. When a child is finished with a mouthed toy, remove it, place it in a toy bin that is inaccessible to other children, and wash hands. Clean and sanitize toys before returning to the children's area.
- We removed most soft toys and items that are not easily cleaned or disinfected.

### General Guidance & Response Procedures for COVID-19 Symptoms or Exposure

- We will be conducting ongoing screening of all children and staff for the following and all children and staff who share a home with anyone who has been in close contact with any of the above will be asked to stay home:
  - Person is showing any of the symptoms of COVID-19
  - Person thinks they could have COVID-19
  - Person has tested positive for COVID-19
  - Person is awaiting the results of testing for COVID-19
- People who are sick with COVID-19 or believe they might have COVID-19 should stay home and separate themselves from other people in the home as much as possible. They will be excluded from the center until they can answer YES to all the following questions:
  - Have you adhered to the requisite state timeline since you first had symptoms?
  - Have you been without fever for 24 hours without any medicine for fever?
  - Are your other symptoms improved?
- Any child with COVID-19 compatible symptoms should not return to school until they have either received a negative viral test (molecular or antigen) for SARS-CoV-2 or they have completed an isolation period as recommended by CDC and NJ DOH since symptom onset and at least 24 hours after resolution of fever without fever-reducing medications with symptom improvement. A purely clinical alternative diagnosis is no longer acceptable.
- The definition of close contact will be met by our Centers when it's applicable and required by licensing and NJDOH (i.e. 6 feet for 15 minutes in a 24 hour period). A key consideration is the point at which an individual comes in contact with an infected person. The infectious period is considered to be two days prior to the onset of symptoms; if an asymptomatic individual tests positive, the infectious period is considered two days prior to specimen collection. In both cases the infectious period extends for 10 days after the onset of symptoms and one day after the resolution of a fever. In more severe cases or for immunocompromised individuals, the infectious period may last up to 20 days in duration.

- Common factors determining close contact with an infected person include:
  - Proximity
  - Duration
  - Whether the infected individual has symptoms
  - If the infected person was likely to generate respiratory aerosols i.e. coughing, sneezing, shouting, etc.
  - Other environmental factors i.e. crowding, ventilation, indoor vs. outdoor exposure, etc.
- The incubation period for SARS COVID-19 is between 2-14 days. For this reason, the CDC and NJDOH continue to recommend a 14-day quarantine. **Updated guidance, has shortened the quarantine time period under certain circumstances.** We will continue to monitor and follow the guidance provided by the CDC, NJDOH and our Local Health Department in this regard.
- Household members and people who have been in close contact with someone who has had symptoms of COVID-19 should stay home as much as possible based on requisite state timeline guidance, monitor themselves for symptoms, and consult with their local health department. Close contact means within six feet for at least 15 minutes. If they start having symptoms of COVID-19, they should take the same steps as above to prevent spreading it.
- Families should inform the Centers of such close contact or the need of a household member being required to get tested. If a household knowingly withholds a positive test result from Santa Fe, our Centers reserve the right to terminate the relationship with that family and there will be no reimbursement of the initial security deposit and tuition for that month.
- We will report any confirmed or suspected exposure to COVID-19 occurring in the center to both the local department of health and the DCF 9 Office of Licensing.
- **Staff members who choose not to get vaccinated:**
  - Regardless of the reason, if a staff member decides to forgo vaccination, they must submit to weekly testing in accordance with all directives of Executive Order (EO) 264. Staff will submit results to the Owner/Director prior to the start of the preschool week and must be tested before they can return to work. Staff will not be barred from the facility unless they receive a positive test result, are asymptomatic for COVID-19, or have been exposed to a person known to be infected.
- **Children or staff members who develop symptoms of COVID-19 while at the center:**
  - If a child or staff member develops symptoms of COVID-19 while at the center (e.g. fever of 100.4 or higher, cough, shortness of breath, they will be immediately



- separated from the well people until the ill person can leave the center with a parent or guardian.
- If the child has symptoms of COVID-19 (e.g. fever, cough, shortness of breath), the caregiver waiting with the child should remain as far away as safely possible from the child (preferably, 6 feet) with a mask on.
  - The teacher or parent must inform the center immediately if the person is diagnosed with COVID-19.
- **Children or staff members who test positive for COVID-19:**
    - If we become aware of a COVID-19 positive case in our center, we will contact the local health department for guidance. Health officials will provide direction on community or individual case management plans and whether a center should cease operations following the identification of a positive case in the center. The duration may be dependent on staffing levels, outbreak levels in the community and severity of illness in the infected individual. Symptom free children and staff should not attend or work at another center during the closure.
    - All rooms and equipment used by the infected person, and persons potentially exposed to that person, should be cleaned and disinfected in accordance with CDC guidance. Centers uncertain about the extent of potential exposure shall clean and sanitize all rooms.
  - **Returning to Child Care After COVID-19 Diagnosis or Exposure**
    - If a staff member or child contracts or is exposed to COVID-19, they cannot be admitted to a center again until the criteria for lifting transmission based precautions and home isolation have been met. Those criteria are included in the Department of Health's guidance. Families will be required to meet the requisite isolation/quarantine timelines as directed by the state and/or present a doctor's note/negative COVID test result before being allowed to return to the Centers.
  - We will send an email to all parents if there has been any case of COVID-19 confirmed with a child or staff member (names, specifics will be kept confidential).
  - **Travelling Domestically or Internationally**
    - If a family chooses to travel internationally or domestically (defined as travel lasting 24 hours or longer to states or US territories other than those connected to New Jersey, such as Pennsylvania, New York, and Delaware), we will require adherence to current CDC and NJ DOH recommendations as it relates to testing & quarantining for both vaccinated and unvaccinated children travelling.

## ***Santa Fe Child Care Centers***

### ***Pre-School Closings 2023/2024***

|                         |  |
|-------------------------|--|
| <i>September 1</i>      | <i>Staff Preps Day</i>                     |
| <i>September 4</i>      | <i>Labor Day</i>                           |
| <i>November 23 - 24</i> | <i>Thanksgiving Break</i>                  |
| <i>December 25 – 26</i> | <i>Christmas/Winter Holiday Observance</i> |
| <i>January 1</i>        | <i>New Year’s Day</i>                      |
| <i>January 15</i>       | <i>Martin Luther King Jr. Day</i>          |
| <i>February 19</i>      | <i>President’s Day</i>                     |
| <i>March 8</i>          | <i>Staff Development Day</i>               |
| <i>March 29</i>         | <i>Good Friday</i>                         |
| <i>April 1</i>          | <i>Spring Recess Day</i>                   |
| <i>May 27</i>           | <i>Memorial Day</i>                        |
| <i>July 4 – 5</i>       | <i>Independence Day Observance</i>         |

### ***Notable Dates 2023/2024***

|                           |                            |
|---------------------------|----------------------------|
| <i>June 28</i>            | <i>Promotion Day Event</i> |
| <i>July 1 – August 31</i> | <i>Summer Camp</i>         |
| <i>TBD</i>                | <i>Picture Day(s)</i>      |
| <i>TBD</i>                | <i>Fundraiser(s)</i>       |

*Please Note: Dates may be subject to change, but we’ll provide enough time for planning purposes. Alternative Staff Development dates are 4/19 or 4/26 if we need to reschedule*