

Happy Trails Preschool Family Handbook

Welcome!

We are so excited to begin this journey with you and your family! The Department of Early Education and Care (EEC) and I invite you to join in a partnership with us to ensure a high quality child care environment. This handbook will also acquaint you with some of the key EEC standards designed to ensure a safe, healthy and educational child care experience. Below, we have outlined our policies and expectations. If you have any questions or concerns please do not hesitate to contact us, communication is key! We look forward to lots of laughs, learning and love!

A Word from EEC:

EEC is the agency that oversees the early education and care and after school services for families in Massachusetts. As the agency that licenses child care, EEC has quality standards for all licensed programs to ensure high educational value, as well as health and safety. Having a license means that I have demonstrated that I meet the standards outlined in the EEC regulations.

To obtain your own copy of EEC Child Care Regulations, you may download them from the EEC web site at:

http://www.mass.gov/Eeoe/docs/EEC/regs_policies/20090122_606_cmr.pdf

Our program is licensed by the EEC
NORTHEAST REGIONAL EEC OFFICE
(978) 681 - 9684

360 Merrimack Street, Building 9, Third Floor
Lawrence, MA 01843

Parents/Guardians may contact the EEC for information regarding our program's regulatory compliance history.

Statement of Purpose

Happy Trails is a licensed preschool providing care for children from 15 months old to 5 years old. Our goal is to provide a safe, creative and loving environment for your child, where they can learn and grow emotionally, intellectually, socially and physically. We implement our school's plan on providing positive and consistent guidance to children based on their individual needs and development daily! We believe that children learn through play, a flexible schedule and positive relationships. We strive to take our teaching beyond the classroom!

Operating Hours

Operating hours are 7:30 AM to 5:00 PM, Mondays - Fridays.

We ask that children be dropped off by 9:00 AM so they do not miss any of the days activities! After 9:30 AM your child will be considered absent.

Children may be picked up at any time within their session but you will be required to pay the pre-determined weekly payment with no alterations or exceptions.

Capacity

Our current licensed capacity is for 35 children - which is posted on our license. At any one time, we can only care for the number of children that we've been licensed for. If you have concerns or questions about the number of children in our care, please feel free to discuss them with us.

Communication

You may reach us through phone, email or in person.

To set up a meeting, please request a time/date, call or email us.

Please feel free to communicate in a matter you find easiest and most comfortable. You and your family are very important to us, we highly encourage your input and communication!

Open-door Policy

Families are welcome to visit unannounced at anytime while their child is present.

Progress Reports

Progress reports will be done every 6 months. Copies of the progress reports can be made for families to review.

Meals

Parents are responsible for snacks and lunch. We have 2 snack times during care (morning and afternoon) but recommend bringing in an extra snack or two if your child attends from 7:30am - 5:00pm.

Please place ice packs in your child's lunch box when necessary.

We do not heat food - if you'd like your child to have a hot lunch please place it in a heated thermo.

Potty Training

If your child is not potty-trained we will work with you and your child to make this an easy and successful transition!

Your child must be accident free for 2 weeks in pull-up before attending preschool in underwear.

Daily Schedule

Each classroom follows a different daily schedule. The Director will provide you with the schedule specific to your child's classroom.

To Stay at Preschool

Sleeping material

(Sleep material will be sent home every week for washing)

Toothbrush

To Bring in Your Child's Backpack Everyday

Water bottle

Lunch

Snacks

An extra set of clothing

Diapers (If used)

Wipes (If a specific brand must be used - we provide wipes)

Please label EVERYTHING

Program Closures

The following days will be considered paid holidays to the preschool if they happen to fall on your regular day:

- New Years Day
- Martin Luther King Jr Day
- President's Day
- Labor day
- Veteran's Day
- Thanksgiving & Friday after Thanksgiving
- The week of Christmas Day
- Patriots Day
- Memorial Day
- July 4th
- Up to 5 Professional Development Days (determined on a yearly basis - families will have notice at least a month ahead of chosen dates)

THE PRESCHOOL WILL BE CLOSED ON THESE DAYS.

Absences

If your child is absent, you are still required to pay the regular weekly payment.

Snow Days

The preschool will follow Methuen Public Schools' decision for snow days and delayed starts. Snow days will still be a paid day to the preschool if it happens to fall on your child's day of care.

Records

EEC regulations require us to maintain an individual written record for every child in care. These records include the information that parents complete at enrollment, as well as progress reports, incident reports and other documentation regarding your child's care. Records are updated at least annually, but may be updated as frequently as needed. As a parent, you have access to the record that we maintain for your child, and you have the right to add information or to request that information in your child's record be changed or deleted. You also have a right to receive a copy of your child's record.

EEC regulations require that we make children's records available to EEC at any time that EEC may request these records, such as during a licensing/monitoring visit, a complaint investigation, or a financial review of my program. Failure on our part to

provide these records to EEC could result in EEC citing me for regulatory non-compliance or taking legal action against my license. When EEC staff members review children's records in order to ensure that we are in compliance with EEC regulations, at times they may copy and keep the information found in these records in order to review our compliance with all EEC regulations and policies applicable to our program. This information will be kept in our EEC Licensing file or in EEC's financial monitoring file if the information involves issues related to subsidized care. EEC is required by law to keep confidential any personally identifiable information found in children's records collected and maintained by EEC staff members. EEC has a Privacy Policy which discusses how EEC keeps such information confidential. That policy can be found by going to the EEC website at http://www.eec.state.ma.us/docs1/20101124_eec_privacy_policy.pdf. Please let us know about any questions you have regarding your child's record.

Illness Policy

If you notice your child is ill please report this as soon as possible. In conformance with regulations set by the Division of Communicable Disease Control and Department of Health children must stay home when they become seriously ill, have a contagious disease or reportable disease. The following symptoms will require immediate pick up of your child from the preschool: high fever, diarrhea, vomiting, runny and irritated eyes, unexplained rash and if they report excessive pain or discomfort. Children are clear to come back after 24 hours without signs of these symptoms or with a doctor's note.

Medication

Both nonprescription and prescription medications, ointments and creams can be given to your child if needed. You are required to fill out the proper forms and to supply the medication in the original container. All written instructions shall be valid for one year unless a shorter time period is designated by the physician, dentist or you. Medications must be labeled with your child's name. We may not exceed the manufacturer's recommended dosage unless you provide us with written physician's instructions when administering nonprescription medication. You must provide written authorization by a licensed health care practitioner for any non-topical, non-prescription medication you wish to be administered to your child. The first dosage must be given by you. We may not administer nonprescription topical ointments, creams or lotions for longer than 14 consecutive days when used for skin irritations.

Emergencies

In the case of an emergency, we will follow our protocol, we will administer the necessary first aid/CPR and call 911. You will be notified immediately. A copy of our detailed emergency preparedness plan is available to all families and also posted near classroom exits.

Child Abuse & Neglect

Child educators are mandated reporters and must, by law, report suspected child abuse or neglect to the Department of Children and Families. We will notify you immediately of any allegation of abuse or neglect involving your child while in our care and custody.

Payment Procedure

The agreed upon weekly payment for your child's care is due no later than Monday of each week. Payment should be sent through the app.

Late Fees

There will be a fee of \$1 per minute if you are late to pick up your child. The fee must be paid the next day of care. There will be a \$10 fee for each day the weekly payment is late. Child care will be put on hold if payment is not received within 10 days. If the preschool goes more than 2 weeks without receiving payment, the child will no longer be enrolled.

Suspension and Termination Policy

Suspensions will occur after 3 warnings. 1st warning will be a written notice home, 2nd warning will be a parent/teacher conference and 3rd warning will result in a meeting to make a decision. Suspensions will occur for 1 week of care. You are still required to pay the weekly payment during suspensions. Terminations will occur after 3 suspensions and all options have been executed. We will do everything in our power to avoid suspension or termination. Before these last resort decisions you will have the opportunity to meet to discuss options other than this. We will provide referrals, help pursue supportive services to the preschool and develop a plan for behavioral intervention at home and at the preschool. If you wish to terminate our contract, the preschool must be notified 2 weeks prior to the termination. If you fail to do so, there will be a \$300 fee.

Enrollment Policy

* Happy Trails Preschool does not discriminate in providing services based on race, religion, cultural heritage, political beliefs, national origin, marital status, sexual orientation, disability or toilet training status*

Families that are interested in enrolling their child will set up a tour at the preschool to meet the Director, tour and get all necessary information/forms. A non-refundable \$50.00 registration fee along with the registration form needs to be received before a spot is secured. Once the child's spot is secured, families and the Director will determine a start date. All the forms and necessary documents must be received and approved by the preschool before the first day of care.

Revisions

Any revisions to the handbook or contract will be notified to you, in writing, at least 2 weeks prior to the implementation.

Happy Trails Preschool Background Check Policy

All staff are hired based upon CORI, DCF and Fingerprint approval letters. We ensure that all employees are approved by EEC and their status will be maintained while working with us.

Happy Trails Preschool Diapering and Toileting Plan

Diapering Plan

Diapers should be changed when soiled or wet and checked at least every two hours. A clean diaper and necessary supplies must be placed on the changing table.

A disposable liner that covers the surface must be on the changing table prior to changing the child.

New non-latex gloves must be worn for each diaper change.

Each child is washed and dried with individual washing materials, such as single use disposable wipes, during each diaper change.

A child is never left unattended on the changing table.

Soiled diapers are put in a diaper pail that is lined with a leak-proof disposable lining and a tight fitting cover. These diapers must be removed from the center daily or more frequently as necessary.

Clothing, blankets, and linens soiled by feces, urine, vomit, or blood must be double bagged in sealed plastic bags and stored in a separate container with a lid.

The disposable covering on the changing table is changed after each use.

The changing table surface must be sprayed with a bleach solution (1:10) or commercial disinfectant after each use. If using a bleach solution, it must be made fresh daily. Disinfectants and bleach solutions will not be used around the children.

Children's hands must be washed thoroughly with liquid soap and running water after the child has been changed. Staff members must wash their hands thoroughly with liquid soap and running water after changing the child. Hands must be dried with individual or disposable towel.

Toileting Plan

Children are reminded to go to the bathroom several times during the day.

They go into the bathroom in small groups and individually as needed.

A staff member supervises them in the bathroom.

Children must wash their hands with liquid soap and running water after toileting. Staff members must wash their hands with liquid soap and running water after assisting each child with toileting or diapering or using the bathroom themselves. Disposable paper towels are used to dry hands. Toilet training is done in accordance with the request of the parent(s) and is consistent with the child's physical and emotional abilities.

No child is ever punished, verbally abused, or humiliated, for soiling, wetting, or not using the toilet.

Happy Trails Preschool Plan for Transitions

Our educators work with your child during their time here to prepare them for the moment they move from our program, to a Kindergarten classroom. We work to provide your child with the right experiences for a solid foundation heading into this new chapter.

We reach out to the elementary school you would like your child to transition to so we can:

- Keep open communication between our program and the schools.
- Inform you about available activities for incoming students and families.
- Collaborate and share information about your child including their portfolio, assessments, records and other helpful information - only with your permission.

This is a huge transition for your child, we do our best to prepare them for this by:

- Encouraging your child and letting them know that they are ready for this new experience.
- Explaining that many of the things we do in our classroom, will continue in their new classroom.
- Discussing what they can expect and reminding them that they are always able to ask questions.
- We let your child know that they are always welcome back to visit and that we will make a visit to their new classroom (If the school allows it).
- There is a graduation ceremony for all of our students who will be transitioning.

Please do not hesitate to ask questions, we want your child and family to enjoy this new chapter and we will help in any way possible!

Happy Trails Preschool Plan for Referrals

Our staff have the responsibility to inform the licensee (Sabrina Zache) if they have a concern about a child and believe that an assessment for additional services would benefit the child.

Prior to making a referral the licensee will then conduct an observation. The style of observation will depend on what the concerns include. The child's behavior will be observed and recorded on paper. The licensee will also review the child's record to gather more information and make a decision on whether a referral should be made. If after the observation and review the licensee believes a referral needs to be made the licensee will set up a meeting with the child's parents to notify them of the program's concerns. During the meeting the concern and observation will be discussed and a review will be presented to the parents by the licensee and the child's teachers. Our licensee will then provide parents with a list of current referral resources in the community for children in need of social, mental health, educational or medical services and assist parents with the process.

Our referral list includes but is not limited to:

Center for Family Development

Office Location: 45 Merrimack Street, Suite 200, Lowell, MA 01852

Phone: 978-459-2306

Email: cfid@cosicounseling.com

MA Department of Mental Health

Office Location: 15 Union St, Suite 13, Lawrence, MA 01840

Phone: 978-738-4500

Massachusetts Department of Developmental Services

Office Location: 200 Main Street #8, Haverhill, MA 01830

Phone: 978-521-9432 (TTY: 978-521-4391)

Child Care Circuit

Office Location: 190 Hampshire St, Lawrence, MA 01840

Phone: 877-823-2273 / Fax: 978-975-3120

Children's Medical Office

Address: 477 Andover St, North Andover, MA 01845

Phone: (978) 975-3355

South Bay Early Childhood Services - Lawrence

360 Merrimack Street, Building 5, Unit F

Lawrence, MA 01843

Fax: 978-688-4901

Phone: 978-620-0290

REFERRAL LINE: 800-244-4691

Professional Center for Child Development

32 Osgood Street

Andover, MA 01810

Phone: 978-475-3806

Fax: 978-475-6288

*Happy Trails Preschool
Health Care Policy*

Health Care Consultant: Camila Etienne

Telephone Number: 7817991131

Address: 7 Amesbury Street, Worcester MA 01605

Fire Department: 9786889590

Police Department: 9782421500

Ambulance: 9785575642

Emergency Health Care Facility: 9784700800

Poison Control Center: 18002221222

Emergency Back Up: Ilma Kerr

Telephone Number: 6179685741

Our Program: 447 Lowell Street, Methuen MA 01844

Telephone Number: 6177671639

Procedure in case of illness, injury or emergency:

In case of illness or injury the appropriate authorities will be called. Someone trained in first aid will administer first aid to the child until the paramedics arrive. We will immediately call parents and have them meet us at the hospital.

If parents cannot be reached, we will contact emergency contacts listed in the child's file.

The staff member that accompanies the child to the hospital will have the child's authorization forms on hand so that treatment may be started immediately.

A report will be filed and kept in the child's file. A copy is sent to parents. A report of the accident is written in the injury logbook and EEC is properly notified. A child may return to the program only if they have a written doctor's note stating it is safe to do so.

The same procedure will be followed when on field trips.

Our program has specific procedures for meeting potential emergencies including but not limited to:

In the event of an evacuation emergency, I will contact the local authorities to determine whether or not to evacuate the program, or to remain sheltered at the program.

I have been trained to handle all emergency situations in an appropriate manner and am able to communicate basic emergency information to emergency personnel.

I am equipped with a telephone that can be used on or off our premises.

Our program holds practice evacuation drills with staff and children on a regular basis.

There are various exits at our center, the two we focus on are: one in the entrance and one in the back.

Should the program need to be evacuated in the case of a fire, natural disaster, loss of power, heat or hot water, or any other emergency situation, we will meet at an alternate location. The designated meeting place outside of the program for emergencies is across the street.

I will use my cell phone to contact the fire department or other appropriate authorities if the program needs to be evacuated.

Parents/guardians and EEC will be called in the event of an emergency evacuation as soon as everyone has been counted for and safe.

Children are counted as they leave the facility and when they reach the designated meeting place they are counted again and go through a name call.

In the event that a child goes missing from the program, I will call the appropriate authorities to assist me then immediately call the child's parents.

The escape routes from each floor of the licensed child care space will be posted on each floor.

Mild symptoms with which ill children may remain in care:

- Runny nose
- Mild cough

More severe symptoms which require immediate pick up:

- Fever of at least 100 ° F
- Diarrhea
- Vomiting
- Earache
- Headache
- Signs of irritability or confusion
- Sore throat
- Rash

- Fatigue that limits participation
- Eye discharge
- Sick appearance, not feeling well and not able to keep up with program activities
- Lice

Plan for caring for mildly ill children who remain in care:

We will do our best to make sure the child is comfortable. We will sanitize areas/toys used by mildly ill children immediately after use or put it into a bucket kept away from the children to sanitize later. If the mildly ill child gets worse throughout the day and develops any of the more severe symptoms, parents will be asked to pick up immediately.

Plan for administering medication:

Parents must provide written authorization by a licensed health care practitioner for administration of any non topical, non prescription medication to their child. Such authorization shall be valid for one year unless earlier revoked.

Both nonprescription and prescription medications, ointments and creams can be given to your child if needed. You are required to fill out the proper forms and to supply the medication in the original container. All written instructions shall be valid for one year unless a shorter time period is designated by the physician, dentist or you. Medications must be labeled with your child's name. We may not exceed the manufacturer's recommended dosage unless you provide us with written physician's instructions when administering nonprescription medication. You must provide written authorization by a licensed health care practitioner for any non-topical, non-prescription medication you wish to be administered to your child. The first dosage must be given by you. We may not administer nonprescription topical ointments, creams or lotions for longer than 14 consecutive days when used for skin irritations. There will be annual evaluation of the ability of any staff authorized to administer medication to follow the medication administration procedures.

Plan for meeting individual children's specific health care needs:

Parents will fill out forms prior to enrollment indicating allergies, asthma or other chronic conditions. For allergies, parents are asked to provide a food plan listing food that they either can or cannot consume. A Food Allergy Action Plan is created with the parents and the child's physician, and then given to the school. For children with asthma or other chronic conditions, an Individual Health Care Plan is created with the parent and the child's physician, and then given to the school. A list of all health conditions and medications are posted in the child's classroom in a manner that protects the child's privacy. This list is reviewed with all staff.

Parents, with the written permission of their child's health care practitioner, may train staff in implementation of their child's individual health care plan. The director will set up a meeting with parents and staff for this training and will document it.

All appropriate measures will be taken to ensure that the health requirements of children with disabilities will be met when a child with disabilities is enrolled. Parents will be required to create an Individual Health Care Plan with the child's physician and director.

Child educators are mandated reporters and must, by law, report suspected child abuse or neglect to the Department of Children and Families. We will notify you immediately of any allegation of abuse or neglect involving your child while in our care and custody.