



# FAMILY HANDBOOK

2023-2024 School Year



## WELCOME

Dear Family,

We want to take this opportunity to welcome your Family to ours and to thank you for choosing our school for your child's early childhood education needs. Whether you are a first-time parent or one with a few years of experience, we know that choosing a preschool can be a tough decision. Here at Kids Cove LLC, we strive to do all we can to help make this choice as easy as possible. Our goal is to provide the very best early learning experience for your Family so that you may leave with the peace of mind of knowing your child is receiving quality care and education.

As a new member of the Den, we understand that the transition or any change can invoke a variety of emotions. Please rest assured knowing that we at Kids Cove LLC are here to make the transition as smooth as possible.

Our top priority is to provide each child with a safe and engaging atmosphere where they can develop and grow. Through our engaging curriculum and hands-on approach, your child will be able to navigate through life, creating a stable foundation for them to build on for years to come.

Please review this entire handbook and do not hesitate to reach out with any questions you may have! We look forward to getting to know each one of you. Welcome to the Den!

Sincerely,

**Tyler O'Dowd**

Owner/Director

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## ABOUT US

### *Mission*

Imagine a childcare center that met your childcare needs and provided an activity-based learning environment with hands-on strategies. A community of professional caregivers with the credentials to enhance your child's early social and motor skills and teach them advanced studies in the arts and sciences found in an elementary and vocational school, in addition to an activity-based curriculum tailored specifically for children, taught in fun, nurturing caregiving environment. Rest assured, you have come to the right place!

Kids Cove dedicates its efforts and resources toward ensuring top-rated caregiving services coupled with a high-quality activity-based learning environment tailored for children aged 2 to 5 years. Kid's Cove will respond to the needs of its parents and students with excellent caregiving and instruction, an advanced curriculum, flexible programs, local community involvement, and business partnerships.

Kid's Cove has a solid commitment to accessibility and diversity. Its open-door policy embraces all who desire to provide better care, preparedness, and education for their children.

Kid's Cove is committed to leadership in childcare services, higher learning, community services, and promoting cultural diversity. Kid's Cove directs its activities toward student success.

### *Definition of Family*

This handbook refers to the Family as a parent, legal guardian, sponsor, or anyone else who provides for the well-being, best interest, and responsibility of the child in our care.

### *Hours of Operation*

Childcare services are provided from 6:00 AM to 5:30 PM, Monday through Friday.

School-age care will also be conducted at these times during the summer program.

### *Holidays*

We are closed for certain holidays:

- New Year's Eve/ New Year's Day
- Good Friday
- Memorial Day
- Independence Day (July,04)
- Labor Day
- Thanksgiving Break (Thanksgiving Day and the following Friday)
- Christmas Break (Christmas Eve and Christmas Day)

### *Admission & Enrollment*

All admission and enrollment forms must be completed, and the enrollment fee and first tuition payment must be paid before/by your child's first day of attendance.

An enrollment fee of \$100 is due at the time of enrollment, which is non-refundable.

A one-week, non-refundable tuition deposit is required for each child enrolled. This deposit will be held without interest and represent tuition payment for the last week of the child's enrollment. Payment plans can be discussed with the director/owner. Based on the availability and openings, our facility admits children from 2 to 5 years of age.

Children are admitted without regard to race, culture, sex, religion, national origin, or disability. We do not discriminate based on special needs if a safe, supportive environment can be provided.

### *Inclusion*

Kids Cove LLC believes children of all ability levels are entitled to the same opportunities for participation, acceptance, and belonging in childcare. We will make every reasonable accommodation to encourage the full and active participation of all children in our program based on their capabilities and needs.

If children with special needs are enrolled, Section 504 of the federal Rehabilitation Act of 1973 and the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) guidelines shall be consulted regarding the reasonable accommodations a child's disability may require and complied with.

### *Non-Discrimination*

At Kids Cove LLC, if children with special needs are enrolled, Section 504 of the federal Rehabilitation Act of 1973 and the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) guidelines shall be consulted regarding the reasonable accommodations a child's disability may require and comply with. Equal educational opportunities are available for all children, without regard to race, color, creed, national origin, gender, age, ethnicity, religion, disability, parent/provider political beliefs, marital status, sexual orientation or special needs, or any other consideration made unlawful by federal, state, or local laws. Educational programs are designed to meet the varying needs of all students.

### *Family Activities*

Each Family is a child's first teacher. We value families as partners in the growth and development of children in our program. We encourage parents and other family members to be involved in the program, visit children's classrooms, participate in events, and provide feedback on the agenda. We offer a variety of ways in which families can participate in helping us establish and reach our program goals.

### *Confidentiality*

Unless we receive your written consent, information regarding your child will only be released if required by our regulatory and partnering agencies. All records concerning children in our program are confidential.

### *Staff Qualifications*

Our educators are hired in compliance with the state requirements and qualifications as a base minimum. Typical staff certifications are as follows:

| <b>Position Title</b> | <b>Education/Certification</b>  | <b>Experience</b> |
|-----------------------|---|-------------------|
| Lead Teacher          | Associate degree or higher in early childhood education/relevant field. | 2 years           |

Co-Teacher                      Child Development Associate Credential      1 year

Assistant/Aide                      High School Diploma                      0-1 year

Caregivers participate in orientation and ongoing training in child growth and development, healthy and safe environments, developmentally appropriate practices, guidance, family relationships, cultural and individual diversity, and professionalism.

We strongly discourage families from entering employment arrangements with staff (i.e., babysitting). Any agreement between families and caregivers outside the programs and services we offer is private, not connected to or sanctioned by Kids Cove LLC.

### *Child-to-Staff Ratios*

Children are always supervised. All caregivers receive scheduled breaks which reduce fatigue and help to ensure alertness.

We maintain the following standards for the child-to-staff ratios:

1. Chart 1 – Age Grouping.

| Age of Children                            | Adult:Child Ratio | Maximum Group Size |
|--|-------------------|--------------------|
| Six (6) weeks – Fifteen (15) months        | 1:4               | 8                  |
| Twelve (12) – Thirty (30) months           | 1:6               | 12                 |
| Twenty-four (24) – Thirty-five (35) months | 1:7               | 14                 |
| Three (3) years                            | 1:9               | 18                 |
| Four (4) years                             | 1:13              | 20                 |
| Five (5) years                             | 1:16              | 20                 |
| School-age                                 | 1:20              | No Max             |

2. Chart 2 – Age Grouping.

| Age of Children  | Adult:Child Ratio | Maximum Group Size |
|--|-------------------|--------------------|
| Six (6) weeks – Thirty (30) months   | 1:5               | 10                 |
| Two (2) – Four (4) years   | 1:8               | 16                 |
| Two and one-half (2½) – Three (3) years<br>(Thirty (30) – Forty-seven (47) months) | 1:9               | 18                 |
| Two and one-half (2½) – Five (5) years   | 1:11              | 20                 |
| Two and one-half (2½) – Twelve (12) years  | 1:10              | 10                 |
| Three (3) – Five (5) years   | 1:13              | 22                 |
| Four (4) – Five (5) years  | 1:16              | 24                 |
| Five (5) – Twelve (12) years   | 1:20              | No Max             |

3. Chart 3 – Allowable Combined Grouping and Adult:Child Ratio Chart for first/last hour and one-half (½) of each day only:

| Age of Children                        | Adult:Child Ratio | Maximum Group Size |
|--|-------------------|--------------------|
| Two and one-half (2½) – Five (5) years | 1:10              | 10                 |
| Three (3) – Twelve (12) years          | 1:15              | 15                 |
| Four (4) – Twelve (12) years           | 1:20              | 20                 |

Source: THE TENNESSEE DEPARTMENT OF HUMAN SERVICES DIVISION OF CHILD CARE AND COMMUNITY SERVICES (2022).

### *Communication & Family Partnership*

**Daily Communications.** Daily notes from center staff will keep you informed about your child's activities and experiences at the center. Messages will be relayed on the HiMama platform in your child's account at various times of the day.

**Bulletin Boards.** Located throughout the center, bulletin boards provide center news, upcoming events, faculty changes, holiday closing dates, announcements, etc.

**Newsletters.** Monthly newsletters provide center news, events, information, etc. These newsletters are available on our website.

**Email.** We encourage you to provide an email address you regularly use so we may send you announcements, event invitations, newsletters, and general updates.

**Family Visits.** Family participation is encouraged. Visit our classrooms, volunteer, come along on a field trip, or eat a meal with your child. Signing in is required for the safety and protection of our children. Each visitor must wear a visitor's badge while on-premises and sign out upon leaving.

**Parent Night Out.** Family nights are scheduled on 1 Friday of every month. These nights include snacks, drinks, and fun-filled age-appropriate activities for children. Parents' night out allows parents and children time to share, learn, and have fun. Parents get to have an opportunity to have fun while resting assured their child is safe and having fun with their friends.

**Conferences.** Family & teacher conferences occur once a year. During these conferences, we will discuss your child's strengths, likes and dislikes, and learning styles. We will work together to set goals for your child's growth and development. You may request additional conferences regarding your child's progress at any time. We encourage you to communicate any concerns.

### *Open Door Policy*

We are delighted to have family members participate in our program. Parents/Guardians are welcome to visit the program any time during regular program hours.

Open Door Policy does not mean the doors will be unlocked. For the safety and protection of the children, external doors will always be kept locked.

Our team will always do their best to speak with parents/guardians. Since staff days are devoted to caring for children, it is usually only feasible to have a short discussion during regular program hours. If a situation requires a more extended discussion, kindly arrange an appointment.

### *Publicity*

Occasionally, photos will be taken of the children at the center for use within the center or on our website. Written permission will be obtained before the use of photographs.

Unless the Family indicates that they want their child to participate, we will not use pictures and names of children for publicity.

## **CURRICULA & LEARNING**

### *Learning Environment*

We provide a rich learning environment with curricula that are developmentally appropriate to the specific ages in each classroom. Our flexible daily routine allows children to advance at their own pace. We strongly believe that learning happens through play. Learning and exploring are hands-on and are facilitated through interest areas. Our program is designed to enhance children's development in the following areas: creativity, self-expression, decision-making, problem-solving, responsibility, independence, and reasoning. We encourage openness to what is different from us and the ability to work and play with others.

### *Curricula & Assessment*

Kids Cove LLC uses the Creative Kids Curriculum. We aim to ensure a smooth transition for our preschoolers as they depart and move into kindergarten. Through our structure, we provide that each child has the necessary tools to succeed in their educational future. As part of this curriculum, we gather



information about each child's developmental abilities and evaluate progress so we can modify and adjust what we are doing in our classroom to deliver the best-individualized instruction for each child. This evaluation is communicated to families periodically during the school year using various formal and informal tools, forms, and resources.

For information about your child's day, please see copies of daily schedules and lesson plans posted in each classroom.

### *Developmental Screening*

To coincide with curriculum-based assessment(s), we monitor each child's achievement of developmental milestones, share observations with parents/guardians, and provide resource information as needed for further screenings, evaluations, and early intervention and treatment. The developmental screening process is collaborative, involving parents/guardians, and done in conjunction with the child's primary care provider and health, education, and early intervention consultants. Developmental screening is conducted with written consent from the child's parent/guardian(s).

### *Outings and Field Trips*

Weather permitting, we conduct 45 minutes to an hour of supervised outdoor play twice daily for all children. Children are always accounted for.

There will be supervised field trips from time to time, and we require you to join and transport your child on the trip. *The child's Family must sign Permission Slips* for each trip.

For field trips, please dress your child appropriately for the season. Walking shoes are a must, and sandals and flip-flops are not appropriate for walking and make it difficult for your child.

The safety of children and staff will be guarded in all activities of childcare programs. Proper restraint systems (seat belts) and their correct use are critically important during travel to/from the childcare program and during field trips.

### *Transitions*

Your child's transition into childcare should be a positive and exciting learning adventure. We will work with you and your child to ensure a smooth transition occurs as new routines and people are introduced. To learn more about our transitions, please see our "Transition Plan" located on our website. You can also get a physical copy at the center. Please see director about any questions.

#### *The transition from home to the center*

Before your child's first day, you will have an opportunity to tour the center, meet with your child's peers and teachers, and communicate any anticipated concerns. At this time, please share the best communication methods the teacher may use to reach you.

#### *The transition between learning programs*

Children are transitioned to the next program based on age, developmental readiness, state licensing requirements, and space availability. During the transition, current and future teachers will meet with you to propose a plan to introduce your child to the new program.

#### *Transition to elementary school*

Transition activities such as a field trip to a local elementary school and creating a mural of special friends and memorable times at our center will be part of your child's education. We will provide you

with information on local schools, what to expect, and ideas on how to talk to your child about going to elementary school.

### *Electronic Media*

Our daily routine does not include electronic media (television/TV, video, DVD) viewing and computer use. However, we occasionally use a television show without advertisements as a teaching aid and discussion stimulator. All Electronic Media will be screened before use and consist of non-violent and high-quality educational material. Our focus is to provide your child with a positive experience with an increased understanding of the world. Electronic Media will be offered only as a free choice, used to meet a developmental goal, and limited to no more than 60 minutes per week per child. Tennessee rules prohibit any screen time for children under two. This includes TV, videos, and computers.

### *Multiculturalism*

Multiculturalism is vital for all children because it sets social goals and promotes respect for all people and the environment we inhabit. We utilize books, music, games, and a wide range of activities as aids to teach our children respect for our world and the diversity of life in it.

### *Celebrations*

Our holiday policy encourages an enhanced understanding of respect for different cultures and beliefs of children, families, staff, and the community.

### *Rest Time*

After lunch, all children less than 6 years of age, participate in a quiet rest time. Children are not required to sleep and may be given quiet activities. Cots and sheets will be provided. Families are required to bring a travel size pillow and child size blanket for rest time.

School-age children, although not required, shall be provided an opportunity for a regular rest period if the child desires. Space and time for quiet play will be available for children who do not want to rest.

### *Toilet Training*

An essential factor in making the toilet learning experience successful and as low-stress as possible is a family/teacher partnership that supports the child. Research indicates that children can only successfully learn how to use the toilet once they are physically, psychologically, and emotionally ready. Many pediatricians say that most children under 24 months of age are not physically capable of regulating bladder and bowel muscles. Most positive toilet training occurs only after children show signs of physical control or awareness of their bodily functions and when they demonstrate an interest or curiosity in the process. We are committed to working with you to ensure that toilet learning is carried out in a manner consistent with your child's physical and emotional abilities and your Family's concerns. All children must be potty trained or close to it, by the time they begin the transition into the Grizzly Bear room (ages 3-4 years).

## **GUIDANCE**

### *General Procedure*

Kids Cove LLC is committed to each student's success in learning within a caring, responsive, and safe environment free of discrimination, violence, and bullying. Our center works to ensure that all students

have the opportunity and support to develop to their fullest potential and share a personal and meaningful bond with people in the school community.

Thoughtful direction and planning are used to prevent problems and encourage appropriate behavior. Communicating consistently, clear rules and involving children in issue-solving help children develop their ability to become self-disciplined. We encourage children to be fair, be respectful of other people, of property, and learn to understand the results of their actions.

### **Discipline Policy**

We have created a discipline policy that reflects our philosophy of positive guidance with children. A copy of the discipline policy is included in your enrollment package for you to review and sign.

### **Challenging Behavior**

Children are guided to treat each other and adults with self-control and kindness.

Each student at **Kids Cove** has a right to:

- Learn in a safe and friendly place.
- Be treated with respect.
- Receive the help and support of caring adults.

When a child becomes verbally or physically aggressive, we intervene immediately to protect all the children. Our usual approach to helping children with challenging behaviors is to show them how to solve problems using appropriate interactions. When discipline is necessary, it is clear, consistent, and understandable to the child. We maintain zero tolerance for bullying. If you have any concerns about this at any time, please report them to the Director of the Center.

### **Physical Restraint**

Physical restraint is not used or permitted for discipline. There are rare instances when we need to ensure a child's safety or that of others, and we may restrain a child by gently holding them only for as long as necessary to control the situation.

### **Notification of Behavioral Issues to Families**

If a child's behavior/circumstance is of concern, communication will begin with the parents as the first step to understanding the child's individual needs and challenges. We will work together to evaluate these needs in the context of our program.

On rare occasions, a child's behavior may warrant the need to find a more suitable care setting. Examples of such instances include but are not limited to:

- A child appears to be a danger to others.
- Continued care could be harmful to or not in the child's best interest as determined by medical, psychological, or social service personnel.
- Undue burden on our resources and finances for the child's accommodations for success and participation.

## TUITION AND FEES

### *Important Notice*

The office staff will complete all payment and fee processing. Only they will oversee collecting tuition and other fees and contacting families regarding payment issues. If you have a question or concern regarding payment or fee, please contact the Director.

### *Tuition Rates*

Kids Cove LLC reserves the right to adjust these prices at any time and will give a minimum of a one-month notice of the effective change.

#### Full-Time Rate (4-5 days):

| Age/Group                                   | Price (per week) |
|---|------------------|
| Polar Bears (4-5 years of age)              | \$200            |
| Grizzly Bears (3-4 years of age)            | \$215            |
| Black Bears (2-3 years of age)              | \$230            |
| Park Rangers (kindergarten-12 years of age) | \$185            |

#### Part-Time Rate (2-3 days):

| Age/Group                                   | Price (per week) |
|---|------------------|
| Polar Bears (4-5 years of age)              | \$125            |
| Grizzly Bears (3-4 years of age)            | \$140            |
| Black Bears (2-3 years of age)              | \$155            |
| Park Rangers (kindergarten-12 years of age) | \$115            |

Families contract for a specific weekly schedule as indicated on the *Enrollment Agreement Form*. Payment for this contracted schedule is required every week year-round, whether your child attends or not; this enables us to pay teachers a stable salary every year. No credits are given for sick or vacation days, holidays, staff training closure, or closure due to inclement weather.

### *Tuition Deposit*

A Tuition Deposit equal to one week of care is required when registration is confirmed. This deposit is applied to the last week of care provided a one-week written notice is given. This deposit can be paid all at once, split up into four equal installments, or speak with the director about our contractual agreements.

If a one-week written notice is not given when a child has withdrawn from the program, the Family will be billed for that week of care, which will also forfeit their deposit.

### *Adding Extra Days*

Adding extra days apply only to part-time families and are contingent on the prior agreement of days of care needed and availability. This will be handled on a case-by-case basis, and if a

recurrent pattern begins, the child will need to be moved from part-time to full-time enrollment, depending on availability. If there is no open spot, the child will only be allowed on the agreed-upon days. If you have any further questions, please reach out to the Director.

### *Payment*

Payment is always due in advance, with no deduction for absences, holidays, or closures due to inclement weather, power outages, or other situations beyond our control. This means services are prepaid. Payment is due as agreed upon in the enrollment agreement.

A non-refundable Renewal fee of \$75 is due annually on August 01 or the next business day if it falls on a weekend. This allows the center to restock and transition your child into their next room. This will be seen on a separate invoice at the above date.

### *Methods of Payment*

Several methods of payment are available for families convenience. Families can pay by cash, check, money order, automatic electronic funds transfer, or credit card. To set up automatic, reoccurring payments, please utilize the HiMama app. All payments other than cash, check, or money order will be handled through your HiMama portal. You will receive an invoice for the agreed upon enrollment and will pay accordingly. Don't hesitate to get in touch with the Director with any questions.

### *Late Payment Charges*

Late payments can pose severe problems for our programs, and as a result, the business cannot afford to allow families to accrue a balance equal to more than one week of tuition. **Late payments will result in the imposition of late payment fees. Failure to pay childcare payments will result in childcare services being terminated.**

If payment is not received on the day that it is due, an initial late fee of \$25 will be added to your next tuition payment, and \$10 for each day after that it is late. **Repeated late payments will result in your Family being required to set up automatic or credit card payments.**

Any payments made will be applied to the oldest charges, and late fees may apply if the account still needs to be paid in full by the following tuition due date.

If payment is more than 90 business days past due, we may attempt to recover payment in small claims court, and/or your account may be sent to a 3<sup>rd</sup> party collections agency. You will be responsible for all expenses associated with these actions, including all court and attorney fees.

### *Returned Checks/Rejected Transaction Charges*

All returned checks or rejected ACH (automatic debits) or credit card transactions will be charged a fee of \$20. This charge may be collected electronically. Two or more returned checks or rejected transactions will result in your account being placed on "cash or card only" status.

### *Late Pick-up Fees*

Late pick-up is not a standard program option and will only be considered an exceptional occurrence. Late fees of \$2 per minute will be assessed beginning at 5:30 PM and will be due upon arrival. **Repeated late pick-ups may result in childcare services being terminated.**

### *Other Fees*

- From time to time, additional fees will be associated with particular activities or field trips. These fees are due before the event, activity, or travel.
- As stated above, non-refundable renewal fee of \$75 is due annually on August 01 or the next business day if it falls on a weekend.

### *Credits & No Credits*

- **Families contract for a specific weekly schedule** as completed on the *Enrollment Agreement* Form. Payment for this contracted schedule is required as agreed upon on the enrollment form, year-round whether your child attends; this enables us to pay teachers a stable salary every week all year. No credits are given for sick or vacation days, holidays, staff training closure or closure due to inclement weather, infectious disease (except as noted below), or weather-related or environmental issues.
- **Weather-related or Environmental Disaster or Pandemic** – in the event of a crisis during which we are prohibited from operating, families shall pay 50% for the time away. Payment of your Tuition allows us to retain staff, pay operating expenses, and hold open your child's spot for when we can safely reopen.
- **Credit may be given for Serious Illness/Injury** – In the unfortunate event of extenuating circumstances, such as your child is hospitalized or absent due to a severe contagious disease or serious illness or injury, credit/hold of the spot may be issued with 50% payment for each week child is out. A written doctor's note is required to receive credit.

## **ATTENDANCE & WITHDRAWAL**

### *Absence*

Please call us if your child will be absent or arrive after 9:30 AM. We will be concerned about your child if we do not hear from you. This allows us to account for ratios and food for snacks and breakfast adequately.

### *Vacation*

While we recognize the value of family vacations, the center does not provide credit for vacation days. However, if your child is out the entire week (5 days), you may only be required to pay 50% of your child's tuition to hold that spot. This option may only be utilized for the one week and may only be used a maximum of 2 times per calendar year. After that, the full tuition will be required to hold the roster spot.

### *Withdrawal*

A written notice, one week in advance, is required by the center when a child is withdrawn. Failure to notify will result in forfeiture of your deposit, and you will be invoiced for that week.

### *Transfer of Records*

Whether transitioning to the following program setting or a new classroom, your child's records will be transferred internally.

If your child is transitioning to a new school, a written request from you with instructions on where the records should be sent is required.

### *Closing Due to Extreme Weather*

Should severe weather or other conditions (i.e., snow, storms, floods, tornadoes, hurricanes, earthquakes, blizzards, loss of power, loss of water) prevent us from opening on time or at all, notification to the families will be announced at our website and via automated messaging withing HiMama.

If it becomes necessary to close early, we will contact you or your emergency contacts as soon as possible. Your child's early pick-up is your responsibility to arrange.

## **DROP-OFF AND PICK-UP**

### *General Procedure*

We open at 6:00 AM. Please do not drop off your child before the opening. Parents are expected to accompany their children and sign them in.

We close at 5:30 PM. Please allow enough time to arrive, sign your child out, and leave by closing time.

Our address is 209 Sunset Drive NW Cleveland, TN 37312. Your child must be signed in via our HiMama app and in the classroom. It is required that the parents greet the teacher with the child to ensure the transition of care from the parents to the center. Failure to do this will impose unnecessary safety concerns for the child.

### *Cell Phone Usage*

The times you spend in the center dropping off and picking up your child are the primary windows of time we must communicate with you about your child. To make the best use of these opportunities and be attentive to your child and other children, we ask that you NOT use your cell phone at any time while visiting the center.

### *Authorized & Unauthorized Pick-up*

Your child will only be released to you or those persons you have listed as Emergency and Release Contacts. If you want a person not identified as an Emergency and Release Contact to pick up your child, you must notify us in advance, in writing. Your child will only be released with prior written authorization. The person picking up your child will be required to show a picture ID as verification. Please notify your pick-up person of our policy.

We will need copies of any court-ordered custody agreements to safeguard your child. Without a custody agreement, we cannot prevent the release of your child to a parent.

If a child has not been picked up after closing and we have not heard from you, attempts will be made to contact you and the contacts listed as Emergency and Release Contacts. Provisions will be made for someone to stay with your child as long as possible, but if after 6:30 and we have not been able to reach you or a person listed as an Emergency and Release Contact, we will call the local child protective services agency.

### *Right to Refuse Child Release*

We may refuse to release children if we have reasonable cause to suspect that any person picking up a child is under the influence of drugs or alcohol or is physically or emotionally impaired in any way that may endanger the child. To protect your child, we may request that another adult listed as an Emergency

and Release Contact pick up the child, or we may call the police to prevent potential harm to your child. Reoccurring situations may result in the release of your child from the program.

## PERSONAL BELONGINGS

### *What to Bring*

1. **Black Bears** (2-3 years of age): a backpack with appropriate toileting supplies, at least two changes of clothes or more per day if going through the toilet training program, and water bottle/sippy cup labeled with their name. For rest time, a travel size pillow, and a child size blanket.
2. **Grizzly Bears** (3-4 years of age): a backpack with at least one change of clothes, socks, and a water bottle/sippy cup labeled with their name. For rest time, a travel size pillow, and a child size blanket.
3. **Polar Bears** (4-5 years of age): a backpack with at least one change of clothes, and a water bottle labeled with their name. For rest time, a travel size pillow, and a child size blanket.
4. **Park Rangers:** a backpack with at least one change of clothes, and a water bottle labeled with their name.

Please label all items brought from home with your child's name (i.e., clothes, cups, diapers, mat sheet, blanket, etc.) to prevent things from becoming misplaced or lost. We are not responsible for lost or damaged items. Personal belongings and soiled clothing will be sent home on an as-needed basis for laundering and return to the center. Nap time materials will be sent home weekly for laundering and return to the center.

### *Cubbies*

Upon enrollment, each child will be assigned a "cubby." Cubbies are labeled with your child's name. Please check your child's cubby daily for items that must be taken home.

### *Lost & Found*

You can look for lost items and bring found objects to the Lost-and-found Box in the main office. Please note that we are not responsible for lost personal property.

### *Toys from Home*

We request that you only allow your child to bring toys from home into the center if they are part of a show-and-tell activity.

## NUTRITION

### *Foods Brought from Home*

Food brought from home is permitted under the following conditions:

- Perishable food to be shared with other children must be store-bought and in its original package.
- Foods should be labeled with the child's name, date, and type of food.



- Children will only be allowed to share food provided by the child's Family if the food is intended for sharing with all the children.
- Leftover food will be discarded except for foods that do not require refrigeration and/or come in a commercially wrapped package that was never opened.

| <b>Good Lunch Box Suggestions for a Balanced, Nutritional Lunch.</b>                          |   |
|---|---|
| Bean & cheese dip<br>Tortilla chips<br>(crackers)<br>Tropical fruit salad<br>Broccoli<br>Milk | Chicken strips<br>Whole Wheat Roll<br>Orange wedges<br>Broccoli<br>Milk   |
| Cheese quiche<br>Fresh fruit cup<br>Broccoli<br>Milk  | Whole Wheat Macaroni<br>&<br>Tuna Salad<br>Green Beans<br>Carrots<br>Milk |

### *Food Prepared for or at the Center*

Our center will only be providing Breakfast and an afternoon snack. **Parents are required to pack their children a lunch to bring to the center.**

Breakfast and snacks at the center will be adequately planned, prepared, and portioned according to the Child and Adult Care Food Program (<http://www.fns.usda.gov/cnd/care/>) and the state requirements for food service. Our Daily Menu will be located on the bulletin boards in the classrooms as well as the main lobby.

### *Food Allergies*

If your child has a food allergy, you must notify us in writing so we can make appropriate substitutions. The written notification should list appropriate food substitutions and must be updated at least annually.

Food allergies can be life-threatening, and each child with a food allergy should have an action plan for emergency care completed by the family physician.

### *Mealtime*

Breakfast will be served from 7:15-8:15. Please ensure that if your child needs to eat Breakfast, they arrive within the listed times. Otherwise, please ensure your child has had Breakfast before coming to the childcare center and is supplied with a good lunch for the program. Everyone sits at the same table, and children are encouraged to feed themselves. Good table manners are modeled and encouraged. Weekly menus are posted for viewing by parents/caregivers. Each caregiver is trained in first aid/CPR for choking and is present at all meals.

### *Children 24 Months and Older*

- Children shall only go up to 4 hours without a meal or snack being provided.

- Children are encouraged to self-feed to the extent that they have the skills. Children are encouraged but not forced to eat a variety of foods.
- Round, firm foods that pose a choking hazard for children under four years of age are not recommended. These foods include hot dogs, whole grapes, popcorn, etc. If the above listed foods are brought, they must be cut up to prevent choking.

### *School Aged Participants*

- Summer care participants will be offered a snack at each session, this is not a meal. If your child is arriving before 8 AM, arrangements can be made to serve your child breakfast. Otherwise, please ensure your child has Breakfast before coming to the childcare center and is supplied with a good sack lunch for the summer program.

## **HEALTH**

### *Immunizations*

Immunizations are required according to the current schedule recommended by the U.S. Public Health Services and the American Academy of Pediatrics, [www.aap.org](http://www.aap.org), and the Tennessee Department of Human Services. You can find a copy of the immunization schedule on our website. Every January, we check with the public health department or the American Academy of Pediatrics for updates on the recommended immunization schedule. Our state regulations regarding the attendance of children who are not immunized for religious or medical reasons are followed. Unimmunized children have been excluded during outbreaks of vaccine-preventable illness as directed by the state health department.

All caregivers, teachers, and staff must be current with all immunizations routinely recommended for adults by the Advisory Committee on Immunization Practices (ACIP) of the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC).

### *Physicals*

Routine physicals are required according to the current recommendations of the American Academy of Pediatrics, [www.aap.org](http://www.aap.org). A copy of your child's physician should be received before but no later than ten days after your child begins the program. Families are responsible for assuring that their child's physicals are kept up-to-date and that a copy of the child's health assessment results is given to the program.

### *Illness*

We understand that it is difficult for a family member to leave or miss work, but to protect other children; you may not bring a sick child to the center. The center has the right to refuse a child who appears ill. You will be called and asked to retrieve your child if your child exhibits any of the following symptoms, and they must be picked up within 90 minutes of the call. This is not an all-inclusive list. We will try to keep your child comfortable, but they will be excluded from all activities until you arrive.

- Illness that prevents your child from participating in activities.
- Illness that results in a greater need for care than we can provide.
- Illness that poses a risk of the spread of harmful diseases to others.
- Fever (100.1°F or higher) accompanied by other symptoms.
- Diarrhea – stools with blood or mucus, and/or uncontrolled, unformed stools that cannot be contained in a diaper/underwear or toilet.
- Vomiting – green or bloody, and/or more than 2 times during the previous 24 hours.
- Mouth sores caused by drooling.

- Rash with fever, unless a physician has determined it is not a communicable disease.
- Pink or red conjunctiva with white or yellow eye discharge until on antibiotics for 24 hours.
- Impetigo until 24 hours after treatment.
- Strep throat, until 24 hours after treatment.
- Head lice, until treatment and all nits, are removed.
- Scabies, until 24 hours after treatment.
- Chickenpox until all lesions have dried and crusted.
- Pertussis (Whooping Cough) until five days of antibiotics.
- Hepatitis A virus, until one week after immune globulin has been administered.
- Tuberculosis, until a health professional indicates the child is not infectious.
- Rubella, until six days after the rash appears.
- Mumps, until 5 days after onset of parotid gland swelling.
- Measles, until four days after onset of rash.
- Has a physician or other health professional written an order to separate a child from other children?

Children who have been ill may return when:

- They are free of fever (without medication), vomiting, and diarrhea for 24 hours.
- They have been treated with an antibiotic for 24 hours and can participate comfortably in all usual activities.
- They are free of open, oozing skin conditions and drooling (not related to teething) unless:
  - The child's physician signs a note stating that the child's condition is not contagious.
  - A bandage can cover the problematic areas without seepage or drainage through the bandage.
- If a child has a reportable communicable disease, a physician's note stating that the child is no longer contagious and may return to our care is required.

### *Allergy Prevention*

Families are expected to notify us regarding children's food and environmental allergies. Families of children with diagnosed allergies must provide us with a letter detailing the child's symptoms, reactions, treatments, and care. A list of the children's allergies will be posted in the central area, in the classrooms and the kitchen. We are trained to familiarize ourselves and consult the list to avoid the potential of exposing children to substances to which they have known allergies.

### *Medications*

- (A) Our center does not administer prescription or over-the-counter medication to children.
- (B) All medications should be handed to an office staff member with specific written instructions for administration. Medications should always be present in the child's cubby (located in the office) and with the child to administer independently. Our staff will ensure that the medication is recorded along with the directions and proceed to dispense the medication as directed.
- **Prescription medications** require a note signed by the Family and a written order from the child's physician. The label on the medicine meets this requirement. The medication must include your child's name, dosage, current date, frequency, and the name and phone number of the physician. All medications must be in the original container (you may request pharmacies to fill your prescription in two labeled bottles). Please specify the dosage and time(s) to be administered for each medication. Please see the director to get our medication consent form. The office staff will only administer medication, and it will be stored in a locked cabinet (other than emergency medication)

- **Non-prescription medications** require written permission and instructions from the child's primary care physician. The written authorization must include your child's name, dosage, current date, and frequency, and all medications must be in the original container. Non-prescription medication should only be administered for up to three days unless a written order by the physician is received.
- (C) **Non-prescription topical ointments** (e.g., diaper cream or teething gel), sunscreen, and insect repellent all require a note signed by the guardian, specifying frequency and dosage to be administered as well as the length of time the authorization is valid which cannot exceed 12 months. Please see the director to get our consent form.

### *Communicable Diseases*

When an enrolled child or an employee of the center has a (suspected) reportable disease, it is our legal responsibility to notify the local Board of Health or the Department of Public Health. We will take care to notify families about exposure so children can receive preventive treatments. Included among the reportable illnesses are the following:

- Bacterial Meningitis
- Botulism
- Chicken Pox
- COVID-19
- Diphtheria
- Hemophilus Influenza (invasive)
- Measles (including suspect)
- Meningococcal Infection (invasive)
- Poliomyelitis (including suspect)
- Rabies (human only)
- Rubella Congenital and Non-congenital (including suspect)
- Tetanus (including suspect)
- H1N1 Virus
- Any cluster/outbreak of illness
- Tuberculosis

## **SAFETY**

### *Watch Me Grow- Camera System*

Our facility is equipped with a camera system and utilizes the software provided by Watch Me Grow. To learn more about this system you can go to their website, <https://watchmegrow.com/>, or locate the information in the front lobby. This system allows parents to view the classroom and the playground their child is in. You will be provided information on how to set up your account on your child's first day.

Each family will have a 60 min time block that they are able to utilize daily. This can be used all at once or broken up in shorter timespans throughout the day.

There is a strict NO SCREENSHOT policy, your account can be disabled if this policy is not followed. This is out of respect and privacy for the other children in the class. Should there be a concern about something happening in the classroom, please bring it to the Director immediately. The cameras are constantly recording, and our administration will do a proper investigation on the incident.

### *Clothing*

Please dress your child in practical clothing that allows for freedom of movement and is appropriate for the weather. Your child will be involved in various activities, including painting, outdoor play, sand, temperature, and other sensory activities. Our playground is used as an extension of the center, and daily programs are conducted outside whenever weather permits.

One concern is the risk associated with children's clothing that may become entangled with climbing or sliding equipment, which could lead to choking or other serious harm. All drawstrings from children's clothes should be removed as a precaution.

Sandals and flip-flops are inappropriate for center play and make it difficult for your child to participate in some activities. If your child wears sandals, please ensure all shoes have proper backs and will not easily fall off.

### *Extreme Weather and Outdoor Play*

Outdoor play will not occur if the outside temperature is greater than 95 °F (including heat index) or less than 32 °F degrees (including windchill).

### *Injuries*

Safety is a significant concern in childcare, so daily safety inspections are completed inside and outside the center area to prevent injuries. A trained caregiver will administer first aid if your child sustains a minor injury (e.g., scraped knee). You will receive an incident report outlining the incident and the course of action taken. You will be contacted immediately if the damage produces any swelling or needs medical attention. Each classroom is equipped with a first aid kit meeting state regulations.

In a severe medical emergency, the child will be taken to the hospital immediately by ambulance while we try to contact you or emergency contact. The Family will be responsible for all emergency medical expenses.

### *Biting*

Biting is a normal stage of development that is common among infants and toddlers – and sometimes even among preschoolers. It is something that most young children will try at least once. However, it will not be tolerated at our facility.

When biting happens, our response will be to care for and help the child who was bitten and to help the biter learn more appropriate behavior. Our focus will not be on punishment for biting but on effective behaviors that address the specific reason for biting.

Notes will be written to the family of the child who was bitten and the biter's Family. We will work together with the families of each to keep them informed and to develop strategies for change. If the biting persists, measures will be taken to ensure the safety of the other children. This could include but is not limited to a suspension or even termination of the childcare contract.

### *Respectful Behavior*

All children and families will be treated with respect and dignity. In return, we expect the same from all our families. We will not tolerate hostile or aggressive behavior. If this occurs, we reserve the right to ask you to control your behavior or to remove your children from our care.

### *Smoking*

The poisons in secondhand smoke are especially harmful to infants and young children's developing bodies. Therefore the indoor and outdoor center environments and vehicles used by the center are always non-smoking. The use of tobacco in any form is prohibited on the center's premises.

### *Prohibited Substances*

The use of alcohol or illegal drugs is prohibited on the center's premises, and possession of illicit substances or unauthorized potentially toxic substances is not permitted.

Any adult who appears to be inebriated, intoxicated, or otherwise under the influence of mind-altering or polluting substances must leave the premises immediately.

### *Dangerous Weapons*

A dangerous weapon is a gun, knife, razor, or any other object, by the manner it is used or intended to be used, that can inflict bodily harm. Families, children, staff, or guests (other than law enforcement officers) possessing a dangerous weapon will not be permitted onto the premises.

In cases involving a gun, or any other weapon on our premises, the police will be called, and the individual(s) concerned will be immediately removed from the premises. This policy applies to visible or concealed weapons.

### *Child Custody*

Without a court document, both parents/guardians have equal custody rights. We are legally bound to respect the wishes of the parent/guardian with legal custody based on a certified copy of the most recent court order, active restraining order, or court-ordered visitation schedule. We need court documentation to accept the responsibility of deciding which parent/guardian has legal custody.

### *Suspected Child Abuse*

We are required by law to report all observations of child abuse or neglect cases to the appropriate state authorities if we have reasonable cause to believe or suspect a child is suffering from abuse or neglect or is in danger of abuse or neglect, no matter where the abuse might have occurred. The child protective service agency will determine appropriate action and may investigate. It then becomes the agency's role to determine if the report is substantiated and to work with the family to ensure the child's needs are met. Our center will cooperate fully with any investigation and maintain confidentiality concerning any child abuse or neglect report.

## **EMERGENCIES**

### *Lost or Missing Child*

In the highly unlikely event that a child becomes lost or separated from a group, all available staff will search for the child. If the child is not located within 30 minutes, the Family and the police will be notified.

### *Fire Safety*

Our center is fully equipped with the following:

- Fire alarms/smoke detectors

- Emergency exit doors in every room
- Emergency Lights
- Fire extinguishers

Our fire evacuation plan is reviewed with the children and staff monthly.

### ***Emergency Transportation***

Suppose your child needs to be transported due to a medical emergency. In that case, if no other authorized person can be contacted and the need for transportation is essential, an ambulance will be called for a vehicle. A proper escort will accompany the child until a family member or emergency contact arrives. Families will be financially responsible for any medical expenses.

***Emergency Preparedness Plan- You may find a copy of our emergency preparedness plan our website. Any further questions about emergency procedures should be directed to the director of Kids Cove LLC.***

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# Family Handbook Acknowledgement

Please sign this acknowledgment, detach it from the handbook, and return it to the center before enrollment.

This handbook may be updated occasionally, and notice will be provided as updates are implemented.

Thank you for acknowledging the policies and procedures we have established for the safety and welfare of all children in our care. We look forward to getting to know you and your family.

I have received the **Kids Cove LLC Family Handbook**, and I have reviewed the family handbook with a member of the **Kids Cove LLC** staff. It is my responsibility to understand and familiarize myself with the Family Handbook and to ask center management for clarification of any policy, procedure, or information contained in the **Kids Cove LLC Family Handbook** that I need help understanding.

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Recipient Signature

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Date

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Center Staff Signature

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Date

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