

Cookies & Crayons

Handbook & Policies

INTRODUCTION -- WELCOME

We like to welcome you and tell you a little about ourselves and business. Staff here at Cookies & Crayons have many years of experience with children starting with babysitting jobs as young teenagers, working in child development centers and later raising children of our own. ***Cookies & Crayons*** Child Care is a new child care in Montgomery County MD. We've been fingerprinted and FBI background checked, we are also First Aid & CPR Certificated.

We believe parent/provider communication is key to a successful child care relationship. Beyond communication, we provide a healthy, safe, and loving home-like environment for all children where they can learn and grow on a daily basis. We have policies in place to ensure a peaceful environment for all children, parents, and staff here at ***Cookies & Crayons***.

ENROLLMENT POLICY

There are fees & forms that must be completed and in our possession before we can assume the responsibility of caring for your child. You are required to keep us informed of any change in job changes, addresses, telephone numbers, additional childhood immunizations, or other pertinent information as it arises.

Before your child is admitted into child care, a security deposit equal to one week of child care must be paid. Your deposit will be credited towards your last week's fee provided you are in compliance with this handbook and your contract. In the event your child does not start care by the agreed upon date, your position will be forfeited and your deposit to hold the position will become non-refundable.

OPEN DOOR POLICY

We maintain an open door policy for parents during your specific contracted child care hours. Our front door is kept locked for the safety of the children. Please take into consideration our schedule when dropping in or calling, and remember that visitors (even parents) usually cause the children to react in an excited manner that does not normally occur when we are alone with them. We ask that no drop offs, pick ups, and visits be made during our daily Quiet Time from 1 - 3:30 pm. You may drop-in to visit at other times during the day, but please be prepared to take your child with you if your child's personality is such that they will become upset with your departure. This may be especially upsetting to children who are adjusting to child care.

Parents must sign in and initial for both drop offs and picks ups each day. A sign in/out sheet and pen are located by the front door for your convenience.

TRIAL PERIOD

All new children will be cared for on a two-week (14 calendar days) trial period beginning on your child's first actual day of care. During that time the parent or provider may terminate the child care agreement with 24 hours notice. No pre-paid fees will be credited upon cancellation during the Trial Period. After the trial period, a two-week's written notice is required by either party to terminate the agreement (See Termination Policy). Your security deposit is not refundable if services are cancelled during your Trial Period.

ARRIVALS -- DEPARTURES

It is normal for some children to have difficulty separating from parents in the morning or not wanting to leave when it's time to go home. Please be very brief (no more than 5 minutes is sufficient) during these transition times. The longer you prolong the departure the harder it gets for the child to settle down and move on with his/her day.

Children are not permitted to go out to their car unattended at pick up times. When picking children up at the end of the day, parents are asked to come to the front door. We will only release your child to you or someone else you designate. If someone else is to pick up your child, please notify us ahead of time. A verbal notice is fine on that day if this person is on the list of people who are authorized to pick up your child. If the person is NOT on that list, we MUST have written permission to release your child. Please inform emergency contacts, or people designated to pick up your child, that if we do not know them we will need to ask for photo identification. We will not let a child leave without a parent's verbal permission even if that person is listed as one of your designated pickup people including relatives.

HOURS OF OPERATION

Upon enrollment in **Cookies & Crayons** Child Care, we will discuss child care hours based upon your individual needs. Those hours will be specified in your Contract and shall not exceed 10 hours per day. Additional hours may be negotiated ahead of time at my hourly rate in a minimum of one-hour increments.

We require a minimum of two-week's notice in writing if you need to change your enrollment hours. We reserve the right to terminate our child care arrangement if your new hours will not work well for our child care business. In addition, we reserve the right to terminate a part-time child care arrangement if your current hours no longer work for the benefit of our business. For example, but not limited to, if we cannot fill in days opposite of yours and/or we have the opportunity to fill the slot with a full-time child.

We require a minimum of 3 days notice if you decide to bring your child after you've told us your child will not be in attendance on any particular regularly contracted day. In addition, if you've given me less than 3 days notice of your upcoming absence, you may not change your mind and bring your child anyway. You are still required to pay normal fees for your child's absence if either of these situations occurs.

FEES

Payment is due no later than Friday pick-up time of each week. If this day is a holiday, a vacation or planned day off for the parent or the provider, payment is due the previous business day. If you or your child are ill, your payment is still expected unless other arrangements have been previously made. If I close the child care due to my own illness or emergency, payment will be accepted on your first contracted day back to child care. There will be a late fee of \$15 per child for each calendar day (including weekends) that payments are received late beginning the following morning for all payments not made before your contracted pick-up time.

Payments may be made by cash or check payable to **Cookies & Crayons**. No post-dated checks will be accepted.

If there is a change in your child care fees due to your child's age, the new rate will go into effect the first full week after your child's birth date. A new contract must be signed at this time before the new rate will take effect.

If you (or any of your designated drop off or pick up persons) drop off before or pick up after you're contracted hours, you will be charged a late/early fee of \$1 per child per minute that you are late or early. Please respect our hours of operation and choose your drop off and pick up times carefully.

If your check is returned to us for insufficient funds (regardless of the reason), you will be billed \$35 plus all bank fees I incur as a result. This bill is due upon receipt. We have the right to request future cash only payments should this occur.

There will be no refunds given for early closing days.

YOU'RE ABSENCES -- NOTIFICATIONS

You are required to notify us prior to your contracted drop off time if your child will not be coming for the day or if you will be late in arriving. We reserve the right to fill your spot with a last-minute drop in, leave for a scheduled field trip or errand, and/or close child care for the day if no other children are coming in the event you do not call us by your contracted drop off time. You will not be notified if this occurs; it is your responsibility to call.

There will be no refunds or adjustments made to your child care fee for your time missed due to illness, holidays, days off, or your failure to call when late resulting in our leaving the premises or closing child care for the day. A place has been reserved for each child that cannot be filled on a short-term basis.

You are required to inform us if you are at any other location than what is listed on your Enrollment Record and to provide a telephone number for that place.

DROP-IN CARE

For those families using drop-in care, we reserve the right to cancel an agreed upon drop-in care date with a minimum of 48 hours notice to you except in cases of illness or emergency. You are required to give us a minimum of 48-hours notice if you would like to cancel time you've requested us to care for your child(ren) on a drop-in day. If this notice is not given, regular drop-in fees will still apply.

HOLIDAYS, PERSONAL/SICK DAYS, & VACATIONS

We take 8 paid holidays, 5 paid personal/sick days, and 10 unpaid vacation days per calendar year January 1 through December 31.

The 8 paid holidays we take include New Year's Eve, New Year's Day, Good Friday, Memorial Day, July 4th, Labor Day, Thanksgiving & the Friday after, Christmas Eve and Christmas Day. When a Holiday falls on a Saturday, ***Cookies & Crayons*** child care will be closed the preceding Friday with pay. When a holiday falls on a Sunday, ***Cookies & Crayons*** child care will be closed the following Monday with pay.

The 5 paid personal/sick days will be taken throughout the year as needed. Paid personal days are taken for appointments, attend trainings among other things. When we plan for these paid days off we try to schedule them as far in advance as possible so that you may make other child care arrangements. We try to choose days that are convenient for the majority of the families in our care. In the event of either of our illness, notice will be given as soon as possible, however it may be the morning of care. Please have backup care available in the event of my illness or closings.

The 10 unpaid vacation days we take may be taken as 2 full concurrent weeks or broken up as individual days and/or weeks. You will be given a minimum of 2 weeks notice of these planned vacation days.

WEATHER-RELATED AND OTHER CLOSINGS

We reserve the right to close child care early or for the day without notice in the event of unanticipated situations such as, but not limited to, power outages, no water, widespread illness, and/or extreme weather conditions. If the local school system is closed due to the weather, we reserve the right to close child care as well in the interest of safety. These closings will be with pay, limited to 3 per calendar year. The remainder, if they occur, shall be unpaid days.

MEALS & SNACKS (if meals are included)

We serve nutritious meals for all children at no extra cost to you. Children are offered a variety of foods but are not forced to eat. I do encourage each child to try one or two bites of everything, they must eat or try a little of everything before given seconds of anything. Children are sometimes surprised by what they like!

You are responsible for feeding your child if he/she will arrive at child care after a mealtime. Our meal times may vary according to seasonal schedules.

Rules for parents

***Drop off and Pick Up** - Cars must park in visitor parking spaces if our drive way is currently occupied. No cars are allowed to block the driveway of our neighbors. If leaking oil or other fluids other than water please park in the visitor parking spaces and not in our driveway. Always come to the front door to pick up your child.

***Respect Others in the Home** - All children are to respect parents/adults on the premises. Be in control of your child(ren) and enforce House Rules during drop off and pick up times.

***Respect the Rules in Your Handbook** - Read your handbook, ask if unsure of a policy. Communicate! Pay on time. Drop off and pick up on time. Do not linger. Do not bring toys for your child from home unless on special occasion. Provide supplies in a timely manner – diapers/pull ups, appropriate spare clothing for the season and medicines/diaper creams. No shoes in the house (beyond the mat at the front door). **No smoking is permitted on the premises.**

ILLNESS POLICY

The health and well being of all of the children here at **Cookies & Crayons** Child Care is very important to us. It is for the protection of the children that we must insist on a strict adherence to our Illness Policy. Please read it carefully.

SYMPTOMS REQUIRING REMOVAL OF CHILD FROM CHILD CARE (no exceptions)

Communicable Diseases: Not permitted by law in child care. Some of those illnesses are but not limited to:

Infectious Conjunctivitis (pink eye)

Impetigo

Hepatitis A

Scabies

Ringworm

Infectious Diarrhea

Chicken Pox

Scarlet Fever

Lice

Strep Throat

If your child is thought to have a communicable disease, you will be notified and asked to pick him/her up. Your child will be accepted back into care when no longer contagious. All other parents will be notified of the possibility of a communicable disease and what symptoms to watch for. We may require a doctor's note at our discretion upon return to child care.

Fever: Not permitted. A child needs to be fever free for a minimum of 24 hours before returning to child care without the aid of any fever reducing substance. Administering Tylenol to reduce your child's fever so that you can bring him/her to child care is grounds for termination.

Diarrhea: Not permitted. Infants and toddlers with fevers and/or diarrhea pertaining to teething will only be accepted into care with a doctor's note stating that these symptoms are due to teething.

Vomiting: Not permitted. If your child vomits while at child care, you will be expected to come within the hour to pick up your child. The child must stay home until 24 hours have passed with no vomiting episodes.

Runny Nose & Cough: Your child may be brought to child care if he/she has a common cold (slight occasional cough, clear runny nose, occasional sneezing). Discharge of any color other than clear is not acceptable in child care. A constant runny nose which needs wiped continually is not acceptable in child care regardless of the color. If your child has a clear runny nose which lasts longer than a week and you suspect it may be due to allergies, we will require you to bring a doctor's note stating the same. A constant naptime cough that would disrupt the sleep of the other children will require you to keep your child at home.

Rashes: Not permitted. Any rash other than a mild diaper rash must accompany the child to child care with a note from the doctor stating it is not contagious.

Runny and/or Crusty Eyes: Not permitted. Watery, matted, and/or red/pink eyes are not acceptable in child care under any circumstances. A period of 24 hours must pass after symptoms before returning to care.

Excessive Crankiness: If your child is irritable, excessively whining or crying, wants constantly held, or requires more attention than we can provide and still give adequate attention for the other children in our care or disrupts the routine of the other children in our care, you must keep your child home regardless of the presence of other symptoms. If this occurs during child care hours, you will be called to come pick up your child.

Lice: Not permitted back to child care until after the second hair treatment and no nits are present. Your child will be inspected by us upon arrival at child care before you leave.

24-hour Rule: Your child must be free from any of the previous symptoms for a minimum of 24 hours before you can return to child care. **No exceptions.**

Sibling Rule: If you are called to pick up your child who becomes ill during the day, you must also take your other child(ren) with you. At our discretion, we may require siblings to remain out of child care with your ill child.

Please take the above rules seriously. It is always best to call us and ask if you are unsure whether or not you may bring your child(ren) back to child care. Please have a back up plan available for you in the event your child is ill and you feel you cannot miss work. Regular child care fees apply for all children.

ILLNESS IN MY FAMILY

Although we will make every attempt to be available each day, there will be occasions when another family member or a staff member is ill and we are unable to provide service. You will be notified as soon as possible if this occurs, we will credit your next week of care on a day by day basis unless one of us are taking one of our paid sick days. We strongly suggest that you have a family member, a friend, or a substitute provider lined up for those times we are closed due to illness or emergencies. If either staff member or a family member is ill, we will call you the previous evening or as soon as we are aware of the situation. If we ask you to make other arrangements because either one of us/a family member are ill and will hinder the quality of care we give your child, we will not require payment. If, however, child care is open for the day and you choose not to attend because of illness in a staff member or our family, regular child care fees will apply.

When we must be away for a short time (1 - 4 hours), backup care will be provided by our substitute provider. If we are unable to use one of my substitute providers then it will be necessary for me to close for

half the day or the full day. My substitute provider is authorized to carry out the terms of this contract. No child care fees will be credited for partial care days in this situation.

MEDICATIONS

We will administer nonprescription medications, ointments, and creams only if needed. Parents are required to supply all nonprescription medications in their original containers. These must be labeled with the child's name. I will not exceed the manufacturer's recommended dosage unless with written physician's instructions when administering nonprescription medication.

MEDICAL EMERGENCIES

We are trained in Child CPR and First Aid in the case of an EMERGENCY; we will administer the necessary first aid required. If necessary, the State Police, Fire & Rescue Department or Paramedic Unit will be called and your child will be transported to your designated hospital. YOU WILL BE NOTIFIED AS SOON AS POSSIBLE.

We are prepared with an emergency caregiver in cases of unplanned absences of short duration caused by unanticipated circumstances such as illness or accident; you will be notified as soon as possible. If our emergency caregiver can not be located, you may be requested to pick up your child. All costs involved in emergency treatment and/or the cost of an ambulance is your responsibility. The owners of **Cookies & Crayons** Child Care or our families will not be held liable for any sickness/injury of either parent/guardian, family member, or child while on these premises, or while the child is in the company of a staff member during field trips or outings.

BELONGINGS -- SUPPLIES

Do not send toys with your children except on designated show-n-tell days. Children may bring a blanket, binky, or favorite stuffed animal, to be kept at child care, for quiet time.

You are responsible for supplying diapers (we will let you know when more are needed) or pull ups (for potty training children), a minimum of one full change of clothing (including socks and underwear) appropriate for the weather, and appropriate outerwear as requested for the cold season. All items need to be labeled with your child's initials. When soiled clothing is sent home, a clean spare change of clothes should be brought back the next day. It is your responsibility to maintain these items at all times. Keep in mind that if you do not supply a needed item, your child may not be able to participate in an activity or it may prevent all of the children from enjoying an activity.

TOILET TRAINING

Children generally achieve toilet training between the ages of 2 1/2 to 3 years old. If potty training is begun when your child is ready, the task is easy and quick and can often be achieved in one or two days. Some signs to look for include appropriate language skills to communicate the need to use the potty, staying dry for long periods of time, the ability to dress and undress self, and an interest in staying dry or clean. We take a very relaxed attitude towards potty training. Please realize this should be your child's accomplishment and not yours or ours. Children should not be compared to how others are doing. Children train easily when they are ready.

While your child is learning to use the potty our rule is: No overalls, onesies, belts, buckles, snaps, buttons, or zippers. A second set of spare clothing is required.

NAPS -- QUIET TIME

We ask that parents refrain from dropping off and/or picking up their children during our daily quiet time. This is very disruptive for the children.

All children must lie down in the afternoon for a period of quiet time. Even older children need a break from the day to rest and rejuvenate. Children age 2 & up naps in cots/mats. You are to provide all bedding. You may bring a sheet/blanket from home to keep here if you wish.

PRESCHOOL -- ACTIVITIES -- BIRTHDAYS

Our main goal at *Cookies & Crayons* Child Care is to provide a variety of fun learning experiences for all children. We use Maryland State approved curriculums for ages 2-5. !

Each child's birthday is his/her "Special Day". You may supply a special food treat such as cake or cookies for all the children on your child's special day if you'd like. I also have holiday parties occasionally throughout the year. Signup sheets will be posted at the front door for your assistance with these days as needed on a voluntary basis.

FIELD TRIPS

When planning a field trip you may be required/requested to provide a car seat for the day and/or pay any fees associated with the trip. You will be required to sign a permission slip that we will carry with us. In the event of an emergency away from the child care home, your child will be cared for and you will be notified. If you do not wish for your child to attend our field trip, your regular fee is due like any other day, and it will be your responsibility to obtain alternate care for the day. No half day child care will be provided.

FIRE SAFETY

We have a written fire evacuation plan and practice a fire drill with the children at least once each month. In addition, we incorporate fire safety curriculum into our program occasionally. Our home is inspected regularly for fire safety.

TERMINATION POLICY

We reserve the right to terminate for the following reasons (but not limited to):

- * Lack of compliance with handbook regulations
- * Failure to pay or pay on time, bounced checks
- * Failure to complete required forms
- * Lack of parental cooperation, Disrespect
- * False information given by parent either verbally or in writing
- * Consistent late arrivals disrupting our routine
- * Failure of child to adjust to the child care after a reasonable amount of time
- * Continual or serious behavioral issues with the child
- * Physical or verbal abuse of any person or property
- * My inability to meet the child's needs
- * Serious illness of child or provider

We appreciate as much advance notice as possible when terminating, we will give the same courtesy in return. You are required to give two-week's written notice in person when you decide to terminate child care. The two weeks will be paid in full, regardless of whether or not your child is in attendance. Likewise, We will give two-week's written notice of termination, for which full tuition is due, whether or not your child is in attendance. If you do not show up for your regularly contracted day of care, we reserve the right to give you two-weeks notice via telephone, voice mail, and/or email. We reserve the right to give oral notice of immediate termination when there are circumstances that affect the well being and daily routine of the staff, our families, or other children in attendance or in response to blatant disrespect of persons, property, and/or

policies. In this situation, the two-week's payment of tuition is still required and your Deposit is forfeited. Termination notice may not be given while provider or parents are on vacation. You may pay two-week's fees in lieu of two-week's notice.

REVISIONS TO HANDBOOK & CONTRACT

There will be occasional revisions to this handbook and the accompanying contract at which time you will be asked to sign a new contract. We reserve the right to make changes in policies as we deem necessary. You will be notified, in writing, of any changes that may occur.

DAILY SCHEDULE (sample)

6:00 a.m. - 9:00 a.m. ARRIVAL TIME -- FREE PLAY TIME

Children may select toys, books, puzzles, and more on their own, they can also watch children's programming on television if they wish. 9:00 a.m. BREAKFAST TIME

10:30 a.m. MORNING SNACK TIME

10 a.m. - 11:30 a.m. GROUP ACTIVITIES, PRESCHOOL CURRICULUM, OR OUTSIDE PLAY (weather permitting)

12:00 p.m. LUNCH TIME

12:30 p.m. - 1:00 p.m. STORY TIME *Clean up from lunch

1:00 - 3:30 p.m. QUIET TIME

The children do not have to sleep, but they do have to lie down or play quietly on their mat so as not to disturb the other children. School-aged children may play quietly away from the nappers.

4:00 p.m. SNACK TIME

4:30 p.m. - 6:00 p.m. FREE PLAY TIME -- PICK-UP TIME

*note: this is only a general guideline of your child's daily activities; our schedule may vary due to children's wishes, special activity days, the weather, school schedules, etc.

THANK YOU AND WELCOME TO *COOKIES & CRAYONS* CHILD CARE.