

Parent Handbook

Where Kids Are Free to Learn and Grow!



Our Philosophy

At Freedom Child Development Center, we believe that every child is special, unique, and created with a purpose. We offer a warm, caring and nurturing environment that is full of positive learning opportunities. Our program is designed to help every child reach his/her full potential. We offer a “hands on” approach to learning combined with a strong academic curriculum. We believe that play is the child’s “work”. Through play they learn many skills while exploring the world around them. We incorporate play and fun sensory activities throughout our program to enhance each child’s learning experience.

“To assist a child we must provide him with an environment which will enable him to develop freely.” Maria Montessori

Hours of Operation

Freedom Child Development Center will open at 6:00 a.m. and close at 6:00 p.m.

Attendance and Scheduling

Freedom Child Development Center has a 2 day minimum per week policy. Families are required to schedule at least 2 days per week.

Families may choose to enroll on either a full time or part time basis. Please see rate sheet for information on ages and minimum days required.

Schedules are due no later than 12:00 PM Thursday. If we do not receive your child's schedule on Thursday, we will invoice and schedule based on the previous week's schedule.

If your child will be late or will not be attending school, we ask that you call the center by 10:00 a.m., so we may make any staffing changes necessary. If you do not call by 10:00 a.m., we will assume that your child is not attending and may make staffing changes based on current ratio.

You are responsible to pay for the days that you have scheduled. If your child is absent, you are still responsible for those days.

Tuition

Your child's tuition is due on Monday or the first day of attendance for the current week. A late fee of \$25.00 will be charged for late payments.

We will charge a returned check fee for any check that is returned to us for any reason.

An annual supply fee will be charged at the time of enrollment and every August thereafter. The yearly supply fee is \$50.00 per family. The supply fee helps us to replenish supplies, toys, equipment, etc. for the school year. Ask how you can have this fee waived.

Withdrawal from the Program

If you choose to withdraw your child from our program, we ask that you provide a two-week written notice. Your deposit will be returned with a two-week written notice.

Pick up and Drop off

In order to maintain appropriate staff to child ratios, please notify our staff of the time you will bring your child to the center. Please do not arrive early without notifying the center, to ensure that we have the staff to accommodate you. When picking up your child, please note that we close at 6:00 p.m. If you arrive after 6:00 p.m., you will be charged \$2.00 for every minute you are late. This fee will be paid to the staff member who stayed after hours with your child. We ask that you respect our staff, that also have families and obligations to attend to after work hours.

Only those listed by you on your child information sheet may be allowed to pick up your child/children. They must present ID before entering the classroom. Anyone that isn't recognized by our staff will be asked to present identification. Your children's safety is our first priority. Please provide any custody paperwork that would prohibit a parent from picking up your child. We must have this in order to keep a parent from picking up your child.

Holidays

Freedom Child Development Center will close in observance of the following holidays:

New Year's Eve

New Year's Day

Good Friday

Memorial Day

Fourth of July

Friday before Labor Day - Staff Training

Labor Day

We will close at 3:00 PM the Friday before Halloween in preparation for The Big Pumpkin Fest that takes place here on the Freedom Center Grounds.

Thanksgiving and Friday after

Christmas Eve

Christmas Day & Day after Christmas

If a holiday falls on a weekend, it may be observed on the Friday before or the Monday after.

Vacation Days

Full time children will receive 5 vacation days per school year. Full time is defined as being enrolled for 5 full days per week. Vacation days must be scheduled and cannot be used for unplanned absence. Vacation days are good from September through August. Once that year expires, so do your vacation days. They do not roll over into the next school year, and credits are not given if you do not use your vacation days. If you use all of your vacation days and your child needs to be absent, you are responsible to maintain the appropriate day minimums based on your child's age. If your child will be absent for more than 2 consecutive weeks, and you no longer have vacation days, you will be required to pay a reenrollment fee.

Snow Days / Inclement Weather

We will do our best to remain open during inclement weather. However, in the event that it is unsafe for our staff to arrive to work, we will close. We will send a text via Remind 101 to inform families of a closure or delayed start. Please feel free to call the center to make sure that we are open if you do not receive a text notification.

Sick Days

Sick day credits will be applied after the first missed day due to illness. Consecutive days, up to 5 per school year will be credited to your account. Sick day credits will be given to full time students. Full time is defined as being enrolled for 5 full days per week. Part time students will not receive sick day credits.

Health and Medical Policies

To reduce the spread of illness to our students and staff, children must be picked up from the center immediately after we notify you or the emergency contact, that your child is ill. Children with the following symptoms may not attend FCDC, and must not present these symptoms upon return:

A temperature of 100, taken under the arm, or 101 taken with a forehead swipe thermometer. Must be fever free for 24 hours before returning to school.

Any rash, that is not explained by a doctor's note, stating that it's not contagious.

Any communicable disease listed by the Genesee County Health Department.

Vomiting or diarrhea, must be symptom free for 24 hours before returning to school.

Our center holds a "No Nit Policy" for cases of head lice. If it's discovered that a child has head lice, whether live insects or nits (lice eggs), parents will be called to pick up their child. We ask that you treat your child and keep them home until they are nit free. We have found that this is the best way to prevent further spreading.

If your child is diagnosed with an illness that is contagious and is given an antibiotic, they must be on the antibiotic for 24 hours before returning to school.

All children must have a current medical and immunization record by the first day of attendance. These records will be updated annually.

Medications

We will administer medication under the following conditions:

FCDC has a signed medicine form. Forms are located under the sign in sheets on the sign in clipboard.

Prescription medication must be in the original container with the child's name as the person prescribed. Siblings may not share medication at daycare.

FCDC may only administer medication according to the directions on the original medication container. We cannot alter directions without written directions from a doctor.

FCDC must have a signed medicine form to apply any topical treatments including and not limited to:

Sunscreen

Lotion

Diaper rash cream

Chap stick

Essential oil

Injuries / Emergencies

If a child is injured, our staff will be attentive and provide appropriate basic first aid care. If a child is injured beyond basic care, we will call 911 if necessary, then we will contact parents/emergency contact. A report will be made for your child's file and a copy for you to take home.

Children's Personal Items

Please label all of your child's items. Children may bring a special blanket or "lovey" for naptime, however we ask that any personal items be kept in their cubbies until they are in need of it. Toys may not be brought into the classroom unless it is for "show and tell", and they will be kept in their bags until that time.

Behavior Management

Our goal is to provide a positive, warm and caring environment. In order to maintain such an environment, we must have a policy regarding behavior. We will work with all children, however, if a child is behaving in a manner that is harmful to other children, staff, or themselves, then appropriate measures must be taken.

We will strive to create an environment that doesn't cause children to become easily frustrated.

We will use redirection and encouragement of good behavior to help the child make a good choice.

We will remind the child of behavior expectations by using clear, positive statements.

We will use brief supervised separation from the group (timeout), when appropriate for the child's age and development.

An incident report may be filled out and a copy given to parents/guardian if a child harms another child or staff member or if behavior warrants.

If we feel that a child's behavior is interfering with the progress of our program and creating a negative and stressful environment for other children, and after we have taken age appropriate measures to encourage positive behavior, we may ask that you withdraw your child from the program. If you are asked to withdraw your child, you will receive your full deposit upon withdrawal.

Common Courtesy Practices

We ask that families conduct themselves in a courteous manner while on the premises of Freedom Child Development Center. We ask that the following be observed:

- Please refrain from smoking while on the premises.
- Please refrain from using profanity while on the premises.
- Please end cell phone calls before entering your child's classroom.
- Please have your ID handy in the event that a staff member may need to ask for ID.
- Please treat our staff with respect.
- Please understand that we uphold confidentiality standards set for Early Childhood Education. We are not able to give you information about children or information about staff including but not limited to student classroom assignment, who is sick in your child's class, etc.

Freedom Child Development Center

Food and Nutrition Plan

Meals and Meal Times

Breakfast, morning snack, lunch, afternoon snack and milk is included in your child's tuition. Meal times are as follows:

Breakfast: 6:00 AM – 8:15 AM

Morning Snack: 9:00 AM

Lunch: 11:30 AM

Afternoon Snack: 2:30 PM or after school for Latchkey students

Menu

We follow the Michigan Department of Education – Child and Adult Care Food Program Meal Pattern Requirements when planning our menus and serving portion sizes.

A monthly menu is available for viewing on the bulletin board near the entrance and copies are available for taking home on the sign in counter.

Food Preparation

Our meals are prepared on site in our commercial grade kitchen. We undergo regular inspections to insure cleanliness and food safety. Breakfast is warmed in the classrooms.

Allergies

We are a “Nut Free Zone”, therefore, we ask that you do not bring in meals or snacks for your child. We understand that many children have food challenges, and we will accommodate to the best of our ability. If your child has a diagnosed food allergy, we will work with you to make sure your child has all of their nutritional needs met.

Water

Our Preschool room is equipped with a drinking fountain that is available for the children to drink from when needed. Infant and Toddler rooms have water available in cups for them to drink throughout the day.

Written Communication

Infants and toddlers will be given a daily sheet with meals, bottles and drinks recorded as well as the time and how much they ate. Daily sheets for 4 yrs and up are given upon request from the parents.

Meal Routine

Infants and young toddlers are fed on demand. Children eat at the table with their teachers. It's important for children to see adults modeling good table manners and healthy eating habits.

Preschool children are served “Family Style”. Children sit together with their teachers and peers. Food is passed, allowing children to serve themselves. It’s exciting to watch them master pouring their own milk and using patience and self-control while serving themselves. During mealtimes we use the opportunity to talk about making healthy choices, as well as talk about how food grows or where it comes from. Eating at the table with the children in our care helps to create a family like atmosphere. Preschool children learn to be excused from the table and are expected to clean up their area. Children having difficulty will have help from their peers and teachers. We also pray as a class over our food with songs or a simple prayer.

Nutrition Education

Freedom Child Development Center staff attends trainings throughout the year to acquire continuing education credits. Some of our trainings include food service policies, nutritional requirements, creative ways to teach children about healthy food choices, etc.

Parents are welcome to attend trainings along with us to help reinforce good eating habits at home. Children learn about nutrition throughout the year during classroom discussion, play, mealtime choices, lessons, classroom books, etc.

Infant Nutrition

Infants are fed on demand as per State of Michigan Licensing Rules. Parents provide enough prepared bottles (formula or breast milk) daily for their child. Frozen breast milk can be kept at the center and thawed as needed. We do not use the microwave for warming bottles of any type. A bottle warmer is available. We ask parents to label all bottles and food with the child’s first and last name and the date that the bottles were prepared. Frozen breast milk must be labeled as well with the child’s full name and date that the breast milk was frozen. Please bring enough clean bottles to transfer formula or breast milk into. We cannot wash or reuse bottles. Teachers are not allowed to add anything to your child’s bottles or food, unless prescribed with written instructions from the child’s medical doctor. Once infants reach 12 months of age, they are able to eat meals served at Freedom Child Development Center, unless notified otherwise by the parents. We do make substitutions for young toddlers starting out with solid foods.

Nursing Mother’s Room

We provide a quiet room for moms to nurse, bottle feed and pump. This room is located to the left side of the counter in the nursery wing. Please feel free to visit to feed your baby if your schedule allows.

Celebration Treats

We love to celebrate! Feel free to bring store bought, prepackaged treats for birthdays or parties. Please be sure that the treat is nut free.

**Freedom Child Development Center
Statement of Staff and Volunteer Screening**

All Freedom Child Development Staff and unsupervised volunteers are screened through The Michigan Child Care Background Check Program.

Supervision of Volunteers Policy

All volunteers, including parents, will be screened according to FCDC's Staff and Volunteer screening policy. Volunteers will work alongside our staff and will not be left unsupervised with children.

Security and Door Safety

We know it's courteous to hold the door for someone entering the building after you, however, please let the door close behind you and allow the person behind you to use their fob. Every family that enrolls is issued a fob. Additional fobs can be purchased for \$10.00 each. Please do not open the door for ANYONE! We take the safety of our center very seriously. Having door access is a privilege and is contingent on each family following this policy.

Crisis Emergency Procedures

Gas / Chemical Leak in the Building:

Lead teachers will retrieve classroom emergency bag containing emergency cards and classroom count board. Lead teacher and assistant will do a head count and lead the children outside of the building to an offsite location which will be disclosed in the event of an emergency. Lead teacher and assistant will do another head count. Lead teacher will contact 911 if not already done, then begin contacting families. Once the center is safe and families begin to arrive to pick up their child, staff will check ID to ensure children are safely picked up from the center or safe location. Special Needs Plan: Assistant teacher will ensure that any special needs children are with her and are safely led to the designated location. Infants and young toddlers are evacuated using evacuation cribs.

Tornado / Inclement Weather:

Classrooms will follow posted evacuation plans. Lead teachers will retrieve classroom emergency bag containing emergency cards and classroom count board. Lead teacher and assistant will do a head count and lead the children to the posted evacuation areas. Staff will wait with the children until the situation is safe. Lead Teachers will begin to call families. Once the center is safe and families begin to arrive to pick up their child, staff will check ID to ensure children are safely picked up from the center or safe location. Special Needs Plan: Assistant teacher will ensure that any special needs children are with her and are safely led to the designated location. Infants and young toddlers are evacuated using evacuation cribs.

Fire

Staff and children will follow posted evacuation plans to exit the building. Lead teacher will do a head count and retrieve the emergency bag and count board while the assistant leads the children outside to designated spot. Infant room will use evacuation cribs to remove infants from the building. Lead teacher will begin contacting families. Once the center is safe and / or families begin to arrive to pick up their child, staff will check ID to ensure children are safely picked up from the center or safe location. Special Needs Plan: Assistant teacher will ensure that any special needs children are with her and are safely led to the designated location. Infants and young toddlers are evacuated using evacuation cribs.

Power Outage

Director will contact Consumers Energy to get the estimated power restoration time. Director will begin to contact families if the restoration time is over 1 hour. Staff and students will remain in their classrooms until the emergency lights go out or until families arrive to pick up children. In the event that the emergency lights go out, lead teacher will combine with another classroom. Special Needs Plan: Assistant teacher will ensure that any special needs children are with her and are safely led to the designated location. Infants and young toddlers are evacuated using evacuation crib.

Freedom Child Development Center Pesticide Policy

In the event that we need to use a pesticide, we will post a sign to let each person know 48 hours before application. The sign will have the name of the pesticide, the date, the time and location of the application. The sign will remain up for 24 hours.

We are dedicated to using the least amount of chemical control of pests in our program in order to provide the healthiest environment possible for our children. In order to control pests at FCDC:

We attempt to prevent infestation by:

- Taking trash out daily (or more often)
- Cleaning trash cans regularly
- Keeping trash cans or dumpsters covered near buildings
- Keeping ground clear of food and rubbish
- Storing food in sealed plastic containers or metal containers
- Cleaning and sanitizing all dishes, utensils and surfaces used for eating or food preparation after meals and at the end of the day
- Preventing pest entry into facility by sealing cracks and holes.
- Moisture control by maintaining plumbing and water drainage system
- Mechanically managing weeds

We shall keep all records of pesticide application in the event we ever need to use them.

Summer Attendance Policy

We understand that schedules change for some families during the summer months (June – August). We do allow families to suspend their enrollment status during the summer. In order to suspend your child's enrollment status, we ask that your deposit remain with us, ensuring that they are returning at the end of summer. In addition, we ask that you notify us of your intent to suspend your child's enrollment for the summer by May 31st. If you choose to suspend your child's enrollment after May 31st, you will be required to pay a re – enrollment fee of \$50.00 upon your child's return. Knowing how many children we will have enrolled prior to summer helps us to know our summer staffing needs.

Summer Vacation Time:

Unless your child is enrolled full time, you are required to maintain 2 days minimum. If your child is full time, vacation time must be scheduled at least the Thursday prior to the proceeding week in order to use vacation days.

Staff Babysitting Policy

We encourage our families to find after hours care outside of our center. We recognize that we have amazing caregivers, however, we do not encourage our staff to seek employment with the families in the care of FCDC. Furthermore, it is not permitted for our staff to obtain employment that could possibly affect the enrollment status of the children in our care. If a staff member does decide to provide after hours childcare, we ask that they honor our confidentiality policy regarding current staff, former staff, current children, formerly enrolled children, current families, formerly enrolled families, etc. We expect our staff to conduct themselves in a professional manner. It is prohibited for staff to transport children from our center by any means. In the event that a staff member has violated FCDC staff policies, they may be asked to terminate any outside employment. Freedom Child Development Center will not be held liable for care given by it's employees outside of the business hours of the center or off center premises.

Policy Agreement

- ____ Attendance Policy: I understand that 2 days minimum is required for my child to be enrolled at FCDC. This applies to summer, holiday weeks, vacation time (unless my child is enrolled full time with available vacation / sick days). I understand that I will be billed accordingly.
- ____ Illness Policy: I understand that my child must be picked up if they have a temperature of 101 or higher, an unexplained rash or any symptoms of a communicable disease or illness. If my child is too ill to participate in all activities, including going outdoors, we will ask you to pick them up. I understand that my child must be symptom free for at least 24 hours and on medication that is treating the illness.
- ____ Custody Issues: I understand FCDC must have custody paperwork and or court documents stating who may pick up my child.
- ____ Tuition: I have been informed that a \$25.00 Late fee will be applied to my account if my account is past due.
- ____ Late pick up fee: \$2.00 per minute will be charged if your child is picked up after 6:00 PM. Please pay the staff member that stayed after with your child.
- ____ Medication Policy
- ____ Injury / Emergency Policy
- ____ Nutrition Plan
- ____ Common Courtesy Practices
- ____ Behavior Management
- ____ Pesticide Policy
- ____ Summer Attendance Policy
- ____ Summer Vacation Time: We require 2 days minimum all throughout the year, this includes summer. Please review how to suspend your child's enrollment during the summer.
- ____ Staff Babysitting Policy
- I have read and agree to FCDC's Policies. I understand that FCDC will operate according to these policies.

Parent Printed Name and Signature

Child's Name
