Family Handbook

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We Are a Star 4 Facility!

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Mission Statement

Love Jesus, Teach Children, United as the Body of Christ

Welcome

We welcome your family to Grace Point Learning Center, and we count it a privilege that you have chosen our center to care for and love your child. GPLC is a non-profit childcare and educational center in partnership with the Grace Point Church of the Nazarene

Our center cares for children ages 6 weeks through Pre-Kindergarten, a half-day PM Kindergarten program, and Grade School before and after school care. The hours of operation are from 6:30 a.m. to 5:00 p.m., Monday through Friday. We offer both full-time and part-time care to meet our parents' flexible schedules. Through many opportunities for exploration, interaction, and spiritual learning, Grace Point Learning Center is a great place for your child to grow.

Curriculum

Our daily learning environment is based upon the Funnydaffer Curriculum. Funnydaffer is a child and teacher-directed learning environment. You will find open center choices, a wide variety of activities for the children to choose from and small and large group activities. Materials are created that address all aspects of development: social, emotional, cognitive, and physical. Every year, the curriculum programs are rewritten to meet the changing needs of children, keeping the material fresh and up-to-date and considering state and national early childhood learning standards. Teachers use the PA Early Learning Standards to guide their lesson planning. These are available in the office.

For the spiritual growth of our children, the staff are required to:

- See all children come to know that Jesus has a special love for them and is their friend.
- To teach that the Bible is God's Word and contains spiritual truths for young children.
- To exemplify in daily life the guidelines for spiritual and moral development.
- To show each child their responsibility for service to their home, church, school, and community.
- To teach each child that being a Christian means walking and talking with the Lord Jesus.
- To provide opportunities for discovering the benefits of worship and for learning the value of moral, spiritual, and ethical principles through everyday experiences.

We use the Ages and Stages Questionnaire (ASQ) to assess your child's development after their first 45 days and periodically as the teachers and/or director feel necessary. This evaluation will be a brief overview of your child's initial period in our care. A brief meeting will take place between the parent(s) to review this initial evaluation. By signing the Child Care Agreement, you are agreeing to allow GPLC to use this tool with your child. As a part of Keystone Stars guidelines, we use an online observation and assessment tool called Teaching Strategies. As per the Office of Child Development, we are required to provide reports to them as requested.

We will then continue to log observations of your child into the Teaching Strategies system. Regularly, you will receive feedback about your child's development via the Developmental Profile, which is a culmination of the observations that we compile on your child. At least four times annually, you will be offered the opportunity to conference with your child's teacher. Please note that you may request a conference to be scheduled at any point in time.

If a teacher has a concern that a child may have a developmental delay, the first step is to have a conversation with the child's parent(s). After the initial conversation has taken place, the teacher(s) and parent(s) will complete the Ages and Stages Questionnaire. If, through the process of completing the Ages and Stages Questionnaire, it is determined that there may be a need for a referral, a meeting is held with the parent(s) to review the results. Then, the parent(s) is given contact information to continue the referral proces,s and it is the parent's responsibility to ensure that the initial contact is made.

We are committed to partnering with you in your child's learning development. Grace Point Learning Center requests a copy of your child's entire IEP or IFSP to keep in their file. The classroom teacher(s) and/or the director will be available to attend meetings to contribute to the conversation and/or goal setting when needed.

Language Development Policy

GPLC supports language development for all children, including those whose first language is not English, through the use of books, written words, and displays. Staff will make use of visual aids, sign language, gestures, and devices, as needed, to support the development of communication and language.

Center Personnel

Individuals employed at GPLC are chosen not only for their educational background and training but also for their previous experience in the early childhood field. We pride ourselves on hiring the best candidates for the position who feel a call to the childcare ministry. All our staff are required to attend church regularly so that they can meet the spiritual needs of the children. We follow the guidelines of the Pennsylvania Department of Human Services when selecting individuals for specific positions in our center.

As per Act 80 of the Pennsylvania Department of Human Services child day care center regulations, all employees are required to obtain background checks by the Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI fingerprint check), DHS (child abuse clearance), PA State Police Clearance, and National Sex Offenders Registry (NSOR) clearance every 5 years. Satisfactory clearances are a condition of employment. In addition, all staff members are required to be trained in Pediatric First Aid and rescue breathing, and mandated reporting. All staff members are required to be CPR trained. In addition, our staff is required to complete annual training as per the Department of Human Services and Keystone Stars.

Holidays

GPLC will be closed on the following holidays: New Year's Day, Good Friday, Memorial Day, Independence Day, Labor Day, Thanksgiving Break (Thursday and Friday), and Christmas Day. If a holiday falls on a Saturday or Sunday, GPLC will be closed in observance of that holiday on the Friday before or the Monday after the actual holiday**. GPLC will be closed on Christmas Eve if it is a business day.**

Special sign-up sheets will be located on the parent board outside of your child's classroom for the holidays. Please note that you must be signed up by the date provided to attend childcare on these special days. We only schedule the number of staff needed to care for the children who are here.

In-Service Days

GPLC will be **closed for Columbus Day in October and President's Day in February** for teacher in-service days. To meet Department of Human Services regulations and Keystone STARS standards, teachers are required to complete at least 12 hours of training each year. These days were chosen due to the availability of conferences for the teachers to attend. Thank you for supporting the teachers in furthering their education to provide your child with the best quality care.

Inclement Weather Policy

GPLC will be open regular hours through inclement weather unless the center is forced to close by a state of emergency decree or at the discretion of the executive director. Closing announcements will be made in the following ways: Brightwheel and Facebook

Emergency Plan

GPLC has an emergency plan in place, which is updated annually or as needed, as we have a concern for the safety and welfare of the children attending our childcare. Our Emergency Plan provides for a response to all types of emergencies. Depending on the circumstances of the emergency, we will use one of the following protective actions:

- *Immediate Evacuation:* Children are evacuated to a safe area on the grounds in the event of a fire, etc.
- *In-place Sheltering:* Sudden occurrences, weather, or hazardous materials related may dictate that taking cover inside the building is the best immediate response.
- *Evacuation:* Total evacuation of the facility may become necessary if there is a danger in the area. In this case, children will be taken to a relocation facility at Grace United Church of Christ or Grace Point—Ephrata, depending on the severity of the emergency.
- *Modified Operation: This may* include cancellation/postponement or rescheduling of normal activities. These actions are normally taken in case of a winter storm or building problems (such as utility disruptions) that make it unsafe for children, but may be necessary in a variety of situations.

Look for an announcement on our Facebook page or the Brightwheel app relating to any of the emergency actions listed above. We ask that you not call the childcare facility during the emergency. This will keep the main telephone line free to make emergency calls and relay information. The facility director may provide an alternate phone number to call in an emergency.

The Emergency Form, which designates persons to pick up your child, is included in your child's file. Please sign and return this form. It will be used every time your child is released. Please ensure that only those persons you list on the form attempt to pick up your child.

We urge parents not to attempt to make different arrangements during an emergency as this will only create additional confusion and divert staff from their assigned emergency duties.

To assure the safety of your children and our staff, we ask for your understanding and cooperation. Should you have additional questions regarding our emergency operation plan, contact the childcare office.

Enrollment

Pennsylvania Department of Human Services guidelines and Keystone Stars each require that specific forms be completed and on file before a child's admittance into the program. These forms include:

*Parent Consent/Emergency Information
*Parent Agreement
*Child Health Appraisal (within the 30 days of enrollment date)
*Getting Acquainted Forms—Infant, Toddler, Preschool, and SACC

Please note: additional forms are required when enrolling an infant into the program.

The emergency form is subject to parental review twice per year. This six-month review is mandated by the Pennsylvania Department of Human Services to ensure that the information is both current and accurate. **If address, phone number, or employment information changes between these reviews, it needs to be updated with the office promptly.**

Tuition

Tuition is due by Friday of the week before care is given. If the tuition is not paid by next Monday, then a $15 late fee will be applied to your account.

Holding Fee (effective 2/2/24)

A holding fee will be required for an available spot being held. This will include holding a spot for your newborn, maternity leave, summer leave, or any leave longer than 2 weeks. To hold a spot, you will pay the lowest part-time rate for that classroom. Vacation ½ rate credit can be used for the 1st 2 weeks if available.

Transitions

Our goal is to move the children from classroom to classroom with the least amount of time necessary. Generally, transitions occur in the fall and at times in January. To help aid in the transition process, we notify the parent before the change via a transition letter. This explains to the parent when their child will be visiting and when their child will be moving to the new classroom and tells them who their child's teacher(s) will be.

The child will spend one week visiting the new classroom and increasing their time in the new classroom each day. Another way that we assist in the transition process is that we work on key items with the children before they move. Regularly, we also send home information to our parents to give them tips about how they can help their child during certain ages of development. A parent who is interested in more information can contact the office at any time.

For those children who will be transitioning from pre-k to kindergarten, we provide information to the families about educational events occurring at the local school districts. Also, we do participate in meetings with the local school district and their Early Childhood Educator meetings, which help us, as a child care center, align with the expectations of schools.

Exiting/Disenrollment

Parents can receive a refund for unused tuition as a child withdraws ONLY IF a two-week notice is given. A check will be mailed to the address indicated in the child's file. Any balance due must be paid at the time of the child's last day at the center.

A child may be disenrolled from GPLC for the following reasons: disruptive behavior by the child or parent, non-payment of fees, or if GPLC feels that they can no longer meet the needs of the child/family. Please refer to the behavior guidelines and inclusion policies.

The caregiving staff will assist the parent in gathering their child's belongings (if help is needed) at the time of exiting. Regardless of the reason for leaving, parents are required to leave the center properly in a calm, respectful manner. Should any parent become disruptive/uncooperative while exiting, GPLC will request assistance from local authorities.

If a parent chooses to have their child's records transferred to another daycare/school, they must complete an Authorization for Release of Information Form in the childcare office.

Arrival and Departure

Families will receive an email from OpenPath to gain access to the building via an app on their phones. A child must be signed in upon arriving at the center on the kiosk provided and then taken to the appropriate classroom. Parents shall use the same method to sign out their child at departure time. **Children may not be given these codes.**

Please park in front of the Grace Point building or the large lot. Please do not park on the side of the building. **DO NOT leave your car running while you are in the building to drop off/pick up your child.** Please use the entrance designated for daycare (all other doors will be locked). You will be given access to OpenPath. This is an app you can download that will provide you with access to the main door.

The Pennsylvania Department of Human Services requires staffing according to the following child-to-staff ratios:

Infant (6 weeks to 12 months)	1 staff for 4 children	Cuddly Koalas & Busy Bees
Younger Toddler (13 to 24 months)	1 staff for 5 children	Farmhouse Friends
Older Toddler (25 to 35 Months)	1 staff for 6 children	Marvelous Monkeys
Preschool (3 to 5 years)	1 staff for 10 children	Preschool Panda 1 & PreK Panda 2
Young School age (Kind—3rd grade)	1 staff for 12 children	SACC
Older School age (4th-8th grade)	1 staff for 15 children	SACC

GPLC complies with this state regulation by staffing the center according to the schedules provided by parents. For this reason, parents need to adhere to their schedule and contact the office should they need to make an unexpected change.

Occasionally, parents find it necessary to utilize the center at a time not previously scheduled. Our center will be happy to accommodate your needs, provided the center is given advanced notice, space is available in your child's classroom and the center has adequate staff on site to meet state regulations. Any permanent changes must be made to your child's Agreement (in the office).

All children must be accompanied into the classroom by an adult and must be placed directly under the supervision of the staff. The school-age children will get their ID cards and hand them to the classroom teacher. The staff uses the ID cards for supervision purposes to know how many and which individual children are in their care. Children must also be accompanied by a parent/guardian when leaving the center. Parents are required to make verbal and/or visual contact with staff upon pick-up to ensure the safe release of children and to ensure all necessary communication is addressed. The parent assumes responsibility upon pick-up of the child and must supervise the child until exiting the center. Following these guidelines will ensure that your child is always supervised.

Children will be released only to the individuals specifically authorized by the parent/guardian on the required forms in the child's file. Parents are required to give written consent for any change or addition to this information. Please note that persons arriving to pick up children must follow the guidelines listed below:

- Must be free from the influence of alcohol or drugs.
- Must provide picture identification
- Must make contact with the caregiving staff.

Children will not be released to a parent (or other authorized person) if they are exhibiting behavior that gives our staff a reason to believe the parent is impaired in any way. This includes but is not limited to being under the influence of alcohol or medication.

Items Needed for Daycare

For infants and toddlers:

- Diapers
- Wipes
- Formula
- Crib sheet
- For infants (under 1): **a clean bottle must be provided for each feeding.**
- A Bib (if you wish one to be worn on your child)
- Sleepsack – please refer to the "Safe Sleep Policy" notice on a separate sheet.
- Diaper Bag – may not contain any item labeled "Keep out of Reach of Children" (ex: creams, sunscreen, lotions, and medication)
- Breast milk (optional) – must be labeled with the child's initials and the date and time of extraction.

For all children:

- Water Bottle labeled with your child's name.
- A blanket to cover with for napping.
- Optional items for napping include a sheet to cover the mat, a small pillow, and ONE soft quiet sleep toy.
- A change of seasonal clothing, including underclothes, shirt, pants/shorts, and socks. For those children who are potty training (the 2-year-old toddler rooms), a minimum of 3 sets of clothing should be in the child's cubby every day. We do go outside daily; therefore, appropriate **outerwear must be included**.
- At the appropriate time of the year, a bottle of sunscreen lotion is labeled with the child's name. (with a signed release form)
- For summer water activities, a swimsuit (girls- one-piece or two-piece that touch & boys- boxer style), water shoes, and a towel. By providing these items, you are permitting your child to participate in our water activities.

Children learn through exploration, and our programs are designed to allow children to develop hands-on and self-help skills. Children are encouraged to use art materials, paint, and glue...daily. Water and sand play are also a part of our routine. Children should be dressed in clothing that allows for these types of activities. It is also a part of our daily programming to take children outdoors, and, therefore, necessary for all children to have clothing for outdoor play, such as coats, hats, and mittens when appropriate. All items must be labeled with the child's name. If outdoor play is limited or is to be prohibited, a note from the child's physician is required.

Parents are required to take sheets and blankets home at the end of each week for laundering.

Personal Toys/Items

The program at GPLC is structured to provide children with optimum learning experiences. The equipment and play materials are carefully chosen to provide a specific learning environment. With this in mind, we ask that you not allow your child to bring in items (toys) from home to share unless specifically requested to do so by the teacher.

We do not allow toys from home for the following reasons:

- They may hurt or injure other children
- Staff cannot monitor toys at the expense of supervising children
- Children do not understand the concept of possession. Another child may take the toy, and this would cause hurt feelings.
- Toys such as guns (or other toys that promote aggressive behavior) do not promote the type of learning and cooperative play that fall within the principles of our program.
- GPLC is not liable for lost or misplaced toys/items from home.

As previously mentioned, we do allow for ONE soft, quiet sleep toy for naptime.

iPad Usage

To help promote healthy habits with children, we have limited the use of screen time.

Examples of permitted usage:

Very limited background music during the day (no videos)

Entering information on Brightwheel (taking pictures)

Lesson planning on our platform

Dance video for special occasions (Director approval needed)

Showing students an extension of your lesson plan (Director approval needed)

Examples of non-permitted usage:

Allowing the children to use iPads for entertainment

Music videos throughout the day

Watching children shows

Shopping on Amazon, or any other app

Playing games

Toilet Learning

Upon entrance into our two-year-old toddler classroom, we will begin toilet learning regularly. If a parent would like to begin toilet learning before entering our two-year-old toddler room, we will be flexible. We are willing to follow parent recommendations as much as possible in aiding your child in a successful, stress-free toilet learning experience. You should not be surprised if there is some regression in your child's toileting habits upon initial enrollment. When children are becoming toilet trained, please supply the center with at least three complete sets of clothing, including socks & shoes, in case of accidents. Upon turning three, with successful completion of potty learning and room availability, your child will be promoted to our preschool department. (We realize that potty accidents may occur from time to time.)

Child Illness Policy

GPLC Administration and the childcare staff entrusted to care for your child are concerned with your child's health. Despite everyone's efforts, children do get sick. Younger children may get sick more often. Also, children entering a childcare center for the first time may get sick more often for the first few months of their enrollment. Parents will be notified when children demonstrate symptoms of illness while in our care. If office personnel are unable to contact the child's parent(s), the emergency contact person will be notified. In the event the child must be excluded from the program due to illness, he/she will be kept comfortable until the responsible person arrives for pick up. The parent will be provided with a notification informing them when their child may return to child care. ***Parents are asked to arrive within one hour of notification.*** This will ensure the comfort of the child and the health of other children in the program.

Maintaining health and preventing the spread of contagious diseases are the responsibilities shared by both parents and our staff. GPLC maintains an illness log to aid in tracking illnesses in our center so that we may create and implement the appropriate actions as needed. We strongly recommend that parents have their children immunized against major diseases according to the latest recommendations of the American Academy of Pediatrics and the United States Public Health Service. If a parent chooses not to have their child immunized, we must receive a written statement from a medical doctor if it is for medical reasons or from the parent if it is for personal or religious beliefs. If you have any questions, you should call the Pennsylvania Chapter of the American Academy of Pediatrics (ECELS) at (800) 243-2357, and they will contact your family physician to review the requirements.

Health Care Policy

The childcare staff and parents need to recognize the signs/symptoms of illness in children. Fever is a well-known symptom that the parent or our staff uses to identify a child who may be ill. Fever (a rise in the body temperature above normal) is common in young children and is rarely harmful. However, a fever may be the symptom of a contagious or serious illness. Some children with a fever will not be allowed to participate in the program until examined by a health professional. A child's response to fever-reducing medicines does not help decide how sick the child is. Regardless of the presence or height of the fever, it is how sick a child looks or acts that are important.

Most children with mild illnesses do not need to stay home from childcare. Many times, the child has already been exposed to others before seeming sick. Therefore, there is no reason to exclude mildly ill children or those already being treated (and are no longer contagious) unless:

- The child does not feel well enough to participate comfortably in the usual activities. The childcare administrative staff will decide whether to exclude your child from the center.
- The staff cannot care for a sick child without interfering with the care of other children. Again, the decision to exclude your child from the program will be at the discretion of the childcare administrative staff.

Children may not attend GPLC for the following health reasons:

They exhibit outward signs of illness such as:

- Body temperature (under the armpit) exceeding 100
- Continuous coughing/sneezing
- Vomiting
- Diarrhea

They are suffering from the following (not an all-inclusive list):

- Conjunctivitis (pink eye)
- Tonsillitis
- Strep throat
- Ear Infection with drainage
- Upper Respiratory Infection
- Ringworm
- Pinworm
- Communicable diseases-measles, mumps, chicken pox, rubella
- Influenza
- Head/Body Lice
- Impetigo

Children who have recovered from or are being treated for any of the infectious conditions listed above **must** have a "**Return to Childcare**" note from their physician. In the event antibiotic treatment is required, the child must have received the treatment for 24 hours before returning to the center.

Inclusion or exclusion of children with non-contagious conditions such as a disabling injury or illness, asthma, or failure to thrive will be determined by the administrative staff and caregiving staff to provide proper care for the child's special needs. Each case must be considered individually. The administrative staff uses a resource by the American Academy of Pediatrics called Caring For Your Child when referencing when a child is to be excluded from care.

The final decision on whether to exclude a child from the center will be made by the center director. GPLC has the right, through the Department of Human Services, to refuse care to an ill child on any given day or may request that a child be removed from the facility if the child is determined by the staff to be too ill to be in our care. Your child's teacher will provide you with written documentation if your child cannot return to daycare the following day. The authorized pick-up person will sign acknowledging that the child may not immediately return to daycare. In addition, a doctor's excuse or plan of care may be required by the center director or administrative staff before allowing your child to return to the center.

COVID-19 Health Policy Addendum – June 2020

Children may not attend GPLC for the following health reasons. They will need to see a physician and provide a note before they can return to school.

Symptoms of COVID-19:

From the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (www.cdc.gov)
People with COVID-19 have had a wide range of symptoms reported, ranging from mild symptoms to severe illness.

Symptoms may appear 2-14 days after exposure to the virus. People with these symptoms may have COVID-19:

- Cough

- Shortness of breath or difficulty breathing
- Fever ≥ 100.4°F
- Chills
- Muscle pain
- Sore throat
- New loss of taste or smell

This list is not all possible symptoms. Other less common symptoms have been reported, including gastrointestinal symptoms like nausea, vomiting, or diarrhea.

Medication (updated 12/1/24)

Due to strict Pennsylvania Department of Human Services guidelines, only LIFE-SUSTAINING medications will be given by our staff, such as but not limited to an Epi-Pen, an inhaler, or Benadryl for life-threatening allergies.

Please ask your doctor to prescribe medication that can be administered before and after school. If this is not possible, only *parents or legal guardians* may come in to administer medication to their child.

Grace Point Learning Center staff are not permitted to administer over-the-counter and prescription medications, including but not limited to liquid decongestants, cough medications, Orajel, Tylenol, etc.

If children are trying medication for the first time, they must remain home for 24 hours after the first dose.

Child Health Assessment

All children are required to have a complete, up-to-date immunization record on file at GPLC. This policy is per the Pennsylvania Department of Human Services, Office of Child Care Licensing. GPLC will not admit any child whose immunizations are not current according to the Academy of Pediatrics guidelines for immunizing children.
If due to a medical disability or religious belief, you have not immunized your child, please discuss this issue with the daycare administration. You will be required to complete an immunization waiver form and provide certification of the medical disability or religious tenant that precludes the child from being immunized. **The child Health Appraisal form (completed by the child's physician) is required within 30 days of enrollment.**
Initial health reports:

- Infants—must be dated no more than 3 months before the first day of attendance.
- Young toddlers—must be dated no more than 6 months before the first day of attendance.
- Older toddlers and preschoolers—must be dated no more than 1 year before the first day of attendance.

Updated health assessments must be obtained as per the following schedule and provided to the office:

- At least every 6 months for an infant or young toddler.
- At least every 12 months for an older toddler or preschool child.

Please note: A physician's notation on the Child Health Appraisal form (or a separate note from the physician) is necessary to limit foods or activity/activities available to your child for more than two days.

Absences

The center is staffed according to the children's schedules as conveyed by the parent. ***When your child will not attend on a scheduled day, please call the daycare office or message Brightwheel by 9:00 a.m. to notify us of your child's absence.*** If you have not called, your child may not be able to attend. This is at the director's discretion. There will be **a limit of 2 weeks' vacation credit** given. When a child is out for 5 consecutive days, ½ of the tuition credit will be given at a maximum of 2 weeks (10 days) per year. (does not apply to subsidized child care) **Please provide the daycare office with 2 weeks' notice of vacation dates before taking a vacation.**

PART-TIME FAMILIES – must provide a schedule of their childcare needs at least two weeks in advance.

COVID Quarantine Tuition Update

Effective September 1, 2022

To provide quality care for our families, we have to change our billing for children who need to quarantine due to COVID-19. Children aged 3 and up will only be charged ½ of their tuition rate for days 0-5 of quarantine. Then they will need to mask for days 6-10. Children ages 2 and under will only be charged ½ of their tuition rate for days 0-10 of quarantine. This is subject to change.

Accidents/Injuries

From time to time, all children encounter minor injuries during play, such as bumps and "ouchies" that are a part of early childhood. Center staff members are trained in first aid to assess a child's minor injury and provide necessary treatment and comfort. Our staff uses soap and water to clean cuts and scrapes. An INJURY REPORT form will be completed when injuries occur. A signature will be required on every Injury Report from the person who is picking up the child from daycare.

All injuries logged into the Injury Log will be reviewed by the administrative office staff monthly or more often if necessary to identify hazards for corrective action. Through the Injury Log, the administrative staff will create and implement an action plan to correct any potential hazards.

The center will secure the services of 911 for any injury requiring emergency medical care. A staff member will accompany the child to the source of emergency care and remain with him/her until the parent/guardian arrives and assumes responsibility for the child's care.

Nutrition

Grace Point Learning Center is committed to serving quality meals and snacks. Breakfast and snack menus are developed by the office staff. GPLC serves breakfast from **7:45 a.m. to 8:15 a.m.**, and an afternoon snack is served after naptime at approximately **2:30 p.m**. All meals and snacks are prepared on-site. Parents are required to provide written notification of any food/dietary restrictions and complete a "Detailed Allergy Information" form. Notification of food allergies/dietary restrictions must also be accompanied by a written note from the family physician. GPLC will assist parents of those children who have food allergies. We will attempt to modify the menus to accommodate those children. In some cases, where severe multiple food allergies are present, we may not be able to provide all food categories. In this situation, parents need to meet with an administrative staff member to coordinate a satisfactory plan of action for food substitution. Parents are responsible for packing a balanced lunch for their children. Refrigeration is available and milk is served with lunch. All lunches need to be labeled with the child's first and last name. Microwaves are available to warm-up lunches. We ask that warm-ups don't require more than a minute to warm-up due to time management.

Infants - Please introduce new foods to your infant at home before sending them to school due to allergy concerns.

GPLC IS NOT A NUT-FREE FACILITY!!!! We will make a classroom nut-free depending on if a child in a particular classroom has an allergy. If a new student enrolls, this is subject to change at a moment's notice depending on the severity of the potential allergy.

Food items such as cupcakes/birthday cakes or other food for special occasions must have prior approval from the classroom teacher. Please do not bring in any homemade food items due to potential allergic reactions from other children.

Nutrition is important for the development of a physically and emotionally healthy child. Each child is served all the components of the meal. The child may choose what he/she wants to eat. As each child develops, his/her likes and dislikes of food will change. Your child may eat one thing one day and dislike that same thing just a few days later. We do encourage but do not force children to try all foods and drinks served. Remember, it takes children between 10-15 tries to acquire a taste for new food. Our staff tries to sit at the table and eat each meal with the children.

All participants enrolled at Grace Point Learning Center are served the same meals without separate charge regardless of race, color, national origin, sexual orientation, disability, age, religion, ancestry, union membership, or other legally protected classification. There is no discrimination in admissions policy, meal service, or the use of facilities. Any complaints of discrimination will be submitted in writing to the USDA Director, Office of Civil Rights, Room 325-W Whitten Building, 1400 Independence Ave, SW, Washington D.C. 20250-9410.

PREVENTION OF SHAKEN BABY SYNDROME AND ABUSIVE HEAD TRAUMA (2/15/22)

Belief Statement

We, at Grace Point Learning Center and Academy, believe that preventing, recognizing, responding to, and reporting Shaken Baby Syndrome and Abusive Head Trauma (SBS/AHT) is an important function of keeping children safe, protecting their healthy development, providing quality child care, and educating families.

Background

SBS/AHT is the name given to a form of physical child abuse that occurs when an infant or small child is violently shaken and/or there is trauma to the head. Shaking may last only a few seconds but can result in severe injury or even death. According to 55 Pa. Code § 3270.32(a), § 3280.32(a), and § 3290.32(a) relating to the suitability of persons in the facility and compliance with CPSL, and Chapter 3490, certified child care providers must ensure that they are compliant with the federal requirements at 45 CFR 98.41(a)(1)(vi)

relating to the prevention of shaken baby syndrome, abusive head trauma, and child maltreatment. To maintain compliance with 45 CFR 98.41(a)(1)(vi), in addition to the training requirements, childcare providers must have a policy and procedure to identify the prevention of shaken baby syndrome, abusive head trauma, and child maltreatment.

Procedure/Practice

Recognizing:

- Children are observed for signs of abusive head trauma including irritability and/or high-pitched crying, difficulty staying awake/lethargy or loss of consciousness, difficulty breathing, inability to lift the head, seizures, lack of appetite, vomiting, bruises, poor feeding/sucking, no smiling or vocalization, the inability of the eyes to track and/or decreased muscle tone. Bruises may be found on the upper arms, rib cage, or head, resulting from gripping or hitting the head.

Responding to:

- If SBS/ABT is suspected, staff will:
    - Call 911 immediately upon suspecting SBS/AHT and inform the director.
    - Call the parents/guardians.
    - If the child has stopped breathing, trained staff will begin pediatric CPR.

Reporting:

- Instances of suspected child maltreatment in child care are reported to Childline.
  Phone number: 1-800-932-0313

Prevention strategies to assist staff in coping witha crying, fussing, or distraught child

Staff first determine if the child has any physical needs, such as being hungry, tired, sick, or in need of a diaper change. If no physical need is identified, staff will attempt one or more of the following strategies:

- Rock the child, hold the child close, or walk with the child.
- Stand up, hold the child close, and repeatedly bend your knees.
- Sing or talk to the child in a soothing voice.
- Gently rub or stroke the child's back, chest, or tummy.
- Offer a pacifier or try to distract the child with a rattle or toy.
- Take the child for a ride in a stroller.
- Turn on music or white noise.

In addition, the facility:

- Allows for staff who feel they may lose control to have a short, but relatively immediate break away from the children.
- Provides support when parents/guardians are trying to calm a crying child and encourages parents to take a calming break if needed.

Prohibited behaviors

Behaviors that are prohibited include (but are not limited to):

- shaking or jerking a child
- tossing a child into the air or a crib, chair, or car seat
- pushing a child into walls, doors, or furniture

Strategies to assist staff members in understanding how to care for infants

Staff will be trained on how to properly care for infants through various training sessions.

Strategies to ensure staff members understand the brain development of children up to five years of age

All staff will receive training on SBS/AHT within the first two weeks of employment. Training includes recognizing, responding to, and reporting child abuse, neglect, or maltreatment, as well as the brain development of children up to five years of age.

Application

This policy applies to children up to five years of age and their families, operators, early educators, substitute providers, and uncompensated providers.

Communication

Staff

- All current staff members and newly hired staff will be trained in SBS/AHT before providing care for children up to five years of age.

- Staff will sign an acknowledgment form that includes the individual's name, the date the center's policy was given and explained to the individual, the individual's signature, and the date the individual signed the acknowledgment
- The childcare facility shall keep the signed **SBS/AHT staff acknowledgment form** in the staff member's file.

Parents/Guardians

- Within 30 days of adopting this policy, the childcare facility shall review the policy with parents/guardians of currently enrolled children up to five years of age.
- A copy of the policy will be given and explained to the parents/guardians of newly enrolled children up to five years of age on or before the first day the child receives care at the facility.
- Parents/guardians will sign an acknowledgment form that includes the child's name, the date the child first attended the facility, the date the operator's policy was given and explained to the parent, the parent's name, the parent's signature, and the date the parent signed the acknowledgment
- The childcare facility shall keep the signed **SBS/AHT parent acknowledgment form** in the child's file.

Role of Parent

GPLC is committed to families. It is for this reason that our parents play such a vital role in the center. Daily communication with families helps the staff build a necessary partnership between home and center. We encourage parents to discuss any concerns with their child's teacher.

Annually, a Parent Quality Survey is sent home to all families. Parents are strongly encouraged to complete the survey to help ensure quality, provide their feedback, and give suggestions.

Additionally, as a part of the Keystone Stars program and to continually improve our quality, we form partnerships with our stakeholders. Annually, we ask for the assistance of our parents in identifying stakeholders. *What is a stakeholder? It is a business, group, or individuals who are significantly impacted by the children/families who are served by our facility and have the potential to impact the facility.* Examples could include family physicians, volunteer organizations, or government agencies.

A GPLC Board is in place and is a governing body that works on developing policies and procedures, and financial recommendations, and makes presentations to the church board. The GPLC Board is composed of current and former parents, a Grace Point Church of the Nazarene Board member, people from the local community, Grace Point Church of the Nazarene church members, and the child care Director.

Family Code of Conduct

GPLC requires that families of enrolled children shall always behave in a manner consistent with courtesy and respect. One of the goals of the center is to provide an appropriate environment in which a child can grow, learn, and develop. Achieving this ideal environment is not only the responsibility of GPLC employees but is also the responsibility of each parent/adult who enters the center. Families who violate our Family Code of Conduct could have daycare services terminated.

No parent/adult is permitted to curse or use other inappropriate language on center property at any time, whether in the presence of a child or not. Such language is considered offensive and is not Christ-like and will not be tolerated. If a parent /adult feels frustrated or angry, it is more appropriate to verbally express this by using non-offensive language. At no time shall inappropriate language be directed toward members of the staff.

Threats of any kind will not be tolerated and shall be reported to the appropriate authorities. While apologies for such behavior are appreciated, the center will not assume the risk of a second chance. Families must always be in control and responsible for their behavior.

Smoking of any kind will not be permitted on the center's property, both inside and outside. This is the policy of not only GPLC but is also a regulation of the Department of Human Services. Secondhand smoke is considered very unhealthy and is not acceptable in the presence of children in childcare.

Building Safety

The safety of our children is a prime concern in our center. Our safety features include:

- Security system featuring doors that are secured with electronic entrances, allowing only parents and staff access to the facility.

  (Please do not allow others to follow you into the building.)

- Interior play equipment selected for its play value and safety.

• Exterior play equipment that meets standards for fall heights for children.

• Play surfaces that meet or exceed requirements for fall heights.

Confidentiality

At GPLC, confidential and sensitive information will only be shared with our employees who have a "need to know" to most appropriately and safely care for your child. Confidential and sensitive information about staff, other parents, and/or children will not be shared with families as the center strives to protect everyone's right to privacy. Confidential information includes but is not limited to, names, addresses, telephone numbers, disability information, and other health-related information of anyone associated with GPLC.

Outside of the center, confidential and sensitive information about a child will only be shared when the child's family has given express written consent, except where otherwise mandated by law. Parents will be provided with a document detailing the information that is to be shared outside of the center, the persons with whom the information will be shared, and the reason(s) for sharing the information.

Under the Child Protective Services Act, **mandated reporters** are required to report any suspicion of abuse or neglect to the appropriate authorities. Child day care center employees are considered mandated reporters under this law. Teachers and childcare administrators are not required to discuss their suspicions with families before reporting the matter to the appropriate authorities, nor are they required to investigate the cause of any suspicious marks, behavior, or condition before making a report. Under the Act, mandated reporters can be held criminally responsible if they fail to report suspected abuse or neglect. This responsibility is taken very seriously, and we will make all warranted reports to the appropriate authorities. No one, including the center administration/or a child's family, can interfere with this reporting requirement. As mandated reporters, the staff cannot be held liable for reports made to Child Protective Services, which are determined to be unfounded, provided the report was made in "good faith". The Child Protective Services Act is designed to protect the welfare and best interests of all children.

Inclusion Policy

At Grace Point Learning Center, we actively promote inclusive practice to best meet the needs of the children, families, and staff at our center. All children are welcome to attend our school regardless of ability, need, background, culture, religion, gender, or economic circumstances. Through inclusive practice and using Caring for Our Children as a resource, we aim to reflect the diversity of all children, families, and the wider community. When necessary, we will provide modifications and adaptations to help all children achieve success in our program. We are happy to work with students who have an IEP (Individualized Education Plan) and can assist parents with securing additional help and resources when there are mutual concerns about a child's development. Our center participates in Pennsylvania's Child Care Works and with the ELRC for subsidized child care payments.

To provide the best care for our students, we give every child a 45-day assessment based on education and development. Any concerns that are identified by the staff will be shared with parents immediately in confidence in an attempt to create a working plan of action to provide assistance or identify additional resources that may be available to help your child. We are happy to partner with parents in helping every child achieve success in our program.

Child Discipline Policy

GPLC does not support nor condone corporal punishment of children, and such acts are not permitted in the child care center. Families are always welcome to discuss a behavior issue with their child's caregiver and/or the center director and to seek advice and guidance regarding appropriate and effective discipline techniques.

Parents are prohibited from addressing, for correction or discipline, a child who is not their own. Of course, no parent or other adult may physically punish another parent's child. If a parent should witness another parent's child behaving inappropriately or is concerned about behavior reported to them by their child, the parent should direct their concern to the child's caregiver and/or the center director.

Parents should not seek out another parent to discuss their child's inappropriate behavior. These concerns should be brought to the child's caregiver and/or center director. At that point, our staff will address the issue with the other parent. Although you may be curious as to the outcome of such a discussion, classroom staff and/or the center director are strictly prohibited from discussing anything about another child with you. All children enrolled in our center have privacy rights and are protected by our Confidentiality Policy. You may be assured that we will not discuss anything about your child with another parent or adult visiting the

center.

Behavior Guidelines

The staff at Grace Point Learning Center strives to interact with the children frequently, showing affection, interest, and respect. Each child is recognized as an individual in their growth and development. Teachers understand that the social-emotional development of a child is as critical to a child's success in life as the child's cognitive abilities.

Teachers assist children's social and emotional development through creating age and individual-appropriate room arrangements, curriculum, and positive teacher-child interactions that are supportive, responsive, and model appropriate ways to interact with others. To facilitate the development of responsibility, self-regulation, and self-control in children, teachers implement the following guidance techniques:

- Teachers set clear, consistent, fair limits for classroom behavior and in the case of older children, help them to set their limits.
- Teachers use children's mistakes as learning opportunities, describing the situation and encouraging children's evaluation of the problem rather than imposing the solution.
- Teachers anticipate and eliminate potential problems, redirecting children to more acceptable behavior or activity.
- Teachers listen and acknowledge children's feelings and frustrations and respond with respect.
- Teachers guide children to resolve conflicts and model skills that help children to solve their problems.
- Teachers encourage appropriate behaviors, patiently reminding children of rules and their rationale as needed.
- Teachers apply logical or natural consequences in problem situations.

At no time does a teacher use corporal punishment or other negative discipline methods that hurt, humiliate, or frighten children. Food or beverage is never withheld as a form of discipline. The environment is always arranged so that a minimal number of "no's" are necessary, especially with young children.
Teachers help children deal with anger, sadness, and frustration by comforting, identifying, and reflecting on feelings. Children are encouraged to talk about feelings and ideas instead of solving problems with force.

Teachers demonstrate, coach, and model actions and words to help children learn to solve their problems in appropriate ways and on their own. All these problem-solving skills such as turn-taking, helping, listening, negotiating, and appropriate choices begin in infancy.
The rules and guidelines are based on helping children to feel deeply that "I am safe here."

- My body is safe,
- My feelings are safe,
- My thoughts, ideas, and words are safe, and
- My work (the things I made and the materials that I use) is safe.

With a sense of safety comes trust, one of the most basic developmental needs of children and an essential foundation on which all social, emotional, and cognitive development is founded. If children do not feel safe, efforts to teach them nonviolence will always be undermined and the goals to meet the whole needs of the child will be deterred.

If a child places herself or others' health and safety in jeopardy, the teacher or director will arrange a conference with the family to discuss the situation and possible solutions.

BEHAVIOR GUIDELINES POLICY ADDENDUM (Effective 7/1/2019)

Grace Point Learning Center and Academy's decision to suspend or expel a child is difficult for the center and the family. Our teachers and staff will work with the child and their family to take appropriate steps to resolve any problem before suspension or expulsion occurs.

The following are the steps that the GPLC/A teachers and staff will take before suspension or expulsion may occur.
1. Staff will redirect the child from negative behavior
2. The child will receive verbal warnings
3. Staff will complete Behavior Incident Report sheets per behavior
4. The parent or guardian will be notified of the behavior by Brightwheel or a phone call, depending on the severity of the child's behavior
5. Staff and parent/caregiver will complete the assigned screening tool (Ages and Stages) for social-emotional / developmentally appropriate behaviors
6. A parent-teacher conference will be scheduled to discuss potential solutions to classroom behavior (ie: Early Intervention, IU13 services, or Behavioral Health Resources)
7. STARS assigned TA will be requested for classroom support
8. Early Childhood Mental Health Consultation (ECMHC) paperwork will be completed by the center director, classroom teacher, and parent or guardian.

Should the parents/caregivers refuse to follow the above-stated policy, GPLC/A reserves the right to immediate expulsion.

If a child's behavior is determined to be a severe concern or problem to the safety of himself, staff, or other children, termination of services may need to be immediate. The decision to terminate services, in these extreme cases, will be made without regard to the above Behavior Guidelines Policy and will be solely at the discretion of the center director to ensure the safety of all children and staff.

Please remember that each case must be considered on an individual basis. Open communication and collaboration among families, teachers, the administration, and the director is our primary goal and concern for each child.

§ 3270.113. Supervision of children.

(a) Children on the facility premises and on facility excursions off the premises shall be supervised by a staff person at all times. Outdoor play space used by the facility is considered part of the facility premises.

(1) Each staff person shall be assigned the responsibility for the supervision of specific children. The staff person shall know the names and whereabouts of the children in his assigned group. The staff person shall be physically present with the children in his group on the facility premises and on facility excursions off the facility premises.

(2) The requirement for supervision on and off the facility premises includes compliance with the staff:child ratio requirements in § § 3270.51—3270.55 (relating to staff:child ratio).

(b) A facility person may not use any form of physical punishment, including spanking a child.

(c) A facility person may not single out a child for ridicule, threaten harm to the child or the child's family and may not specifically aim to degrade the child or the child's family.

(d) A facility person may not use harsh, demeaning or abusive language in the presence of children.

(e) A facility person may not restrain a child by using bonds, ties or straps to restrict a child's movement or by enclosing the child in a confined space, closet or locked room. The prohibition against restraining a child does not apply to the use of adaptive equipment prescribed for a child with special needs.

Grievance Procedure

The staff at GPLC is committed to ensuring your satisfaction within our center. Experience has demonstrated that open communication between families and center staff is the key to maintaining a positive relationship. We continually look to improve our programs through parent input.

If you have a problem or concern:

- Discuss the problem with your child's caregiver. We maintain an open-door policy in which families are encouraged to visit their child's center at any time. Staff will make every effort to be available to discuss parental concerns regarding their child or classroom procedures.
- If the issue cannot be resolved with the immediate caregiver, then discuss the problem with the administrative staff who are

capable of responding to most issues.

- In rare instances, an issue may arise that cannot be resolved to the mutual satisfaction of the center and the families. Under such circumstances, it may be necessary to disenroll the child(ren). GPLC reserves the right to do so at any point in time at its sole discretion.

Non-Discrimination in Services

Admissions, the provisions of services, and referrals of clients shall be made without regard to race, color, religious creed, disability, ancestry, national origin (including limited English proficiency), age, or sex.

Program services shall be made accessible to eligible persons with disabilities through the most practical and economically feasible methods available. These methods include but are not limited to, equipment redesign, the provision of aides, and the use of alternative service delivery locations. Structural modifications shall be considered only as a last resort among available methods.

Any individual and/or their parent/guardian who believes they have been discriminated against may file a complaint of discrimination with any of the following.

Grace Point Learning Center - Lebanon
900 S. 5th Ave.
Lebanon, PA 17042

or

Grace Point Learning Center - Ephrata
110 Durlach Road
Ephrata, PA 17522

Commonwealth of Pennsylvania
Department of Human Services
BEO/Office of Civil Rights Compliance
Room 225, Health & Welfare Building
PO BOX 2675, Harrisburg, PA 17120
Inquiries: (717) 787-1127
Email: RA-PWDHSCivilRights@pa.gov

PA Human Relations Commission
333 Market St., 8th Floor
Harrisburg, PA 17101
https://www.phrc.pa.gov/File-a-complaint
Inquiries: (717) 787-4410
TTY users only: (717) 787-7279

Office for Civil Rights
U.S Department of Health and Human Services
Centralized Case Management Operations
200 Independence Ave, S.W.
Room 509F HHH Bldg
Washington, D.C. 20201
Customer Response Center (800) 368-1019
TDD: (800) 537-7697
https://www.hhs.gov/ocr/complaints
Email: ocrcomplaint@hhs.gov

U.S Equal Employment Opportunity Commission
801 Market Street, Suite 1000
Philadelphia, PA 19107-3126
Inquiries: (800) 669-4000
TTY users only: (800) 669-6820
https://www.eeoc.gov/federal-sector/overview-federal-sector-eeo-complaint-process
Email: PDOContact@eeoc.gov

NOTES: