



PARENT HANDBOOK

License # 58-03-00354

IMPORTANT CONTACT INFORMATION

Center Phone Number	941-552-1861
Miss Megan's Office	941-552-1862
Fax Number	941-955-3444 Attention: Megan
Pines of Sarasota Switchboard	941-365-0250
Miss Megan's Cell Phone	941-374-5488
Our Address:	1501 N. Orange Avenue Sarasota, FL 34236

HANDBOOK

The staff of The Learning Tree at Pines of Sarasota would like to welcome you to our center. The center was originally established for the use of Pine's employees who require childcare services and has grown to serve our community.

MISSION STATEMENT

Our mission is to provide our employees and our community with quality childcare in an environment that is safe, healthy and provides developmentally appropriate learning opportunities.

PROGRAM PHILOSOPHY

It is the philosophy of The Learning Tree at Pines of Sarasota that children learn best in an environment that is nurturing and relaxed with caring adults who respond to each child's needs quickly. We strive to provide an environment rich in non-sexist and anti-biased opportunities that enhance children's developmental progress at their individual pace.

It is our philosophy that parents are children's first and most important teachers and as such are always welcome and their opinions are valued and respected.

PROGRAM GOALS

To provide an environment that is nurturing and relaxed with caring adults that enhance self-concepts, encourage independence, offer free choice decisions, acquisition of social skills and respect individuality.

To provide large portions of time that children can spend with their friend's participation in different activities. These activities will come the following curriculum areas: Art, Science, Cooking, Music and Movement, Dramatic Play, Language Arts, Large Muscle, Fine Motor and Math Games.

Children will be provided with opportunities to gain competence in a variety of skills that increase their interest and control over their environment.

- To provide activities which stimulate creativity, curiosity and an enthusiasm for learning.
- To provide for the physical wellbeing of each child while in our care.
- To provide opportunities to develop large motor skills and coordination through non-competitive active play.
- To provide an environment where the child knows the limits and expectations and is able to gain self-discipline.
- To develop an awareness and appreciation for nature in each child.
- To provide an atmosphere throughout the center which promotes respect for others and materials.
- To provide activities that are non-sexist and anti-biased.

PARENTAL RIGHTS

- To feel comfortable and secure when leaving their children in our care.
- To be welcome to visit their child at any time throughout the day.
- To have opinions valued and respected.
- To communicate with their child's teacher and other support staff as often as needed.
- To work in partnership with their child's teacher in providing the best possible experience for their child during their time with us.
- To be acknowledged as their child's main and most important teacher.

PARENTAL RESPONSIBILITIES

- To bring their child to school well rested.
- To bring their child to school with weather appropriate clothing.
- To make sure their child has what he/she needs to be comfortable during the day: adequate diaper and wipes, appropriate changes of clothing and a naptime blanket.
- To adhere to Pines of Sarasota Childcare policies.
- To attend Parent/Teacher conferences when scheduled.
- To read their child's daily report and discuss it with him/her.
- To keep current with childcare fees.
- To adhere to Pines of Sarasota Child Care attendance policies

PARENT/FAMILY INVOLVEMENT AND PARTICIPATION

Parents and family members are encouraged to become involved in every aspect of their child's day with us. We welcome parents to join their children for meals and are encouraged to visit the classrooms at any time during the day. Opportunities to volunteer and/or contribute are noted in the newsletters and with letters sent home. We feel very strongly that parental involvement is the key to children's success in school.

STAFF TO CHILD CLASSROOM RATIOS

It is our goal to provide the best possible experience for the children enrolled in our center. To attain that goal, we maintain low staff to child ratios. Our ratios are listed below according to the age groups:

Infants:	1 teacher: 4 children
Toddlers	1 teacher: 6 children
Twos:	1 teacher: 9 children
Preschool:	1 teacher: 11 children
VPK:	1 Teacher: 11 children

Additionally, we have multiple teacher assistants to assist when and where They are needed.

Some of these ratios may change due to the makeup of the classroom. For example, if we have children who may need additional support, our ratios may decrease in order to provide the children what is needed. The ratios will never exceed licensing regulation.

PROGRAM POLICIES

- The childcare center is open from 6:30 am until 5:30 pm.
- The child care center is closed on Memorial Day, Fourth of July, Labor Day, Thanksgiving, Christmas Eve, Christmas Day and New Year's Day. The center will be open with a skeleton crew for children of employees who are scheduled to work on all holidays excluding Christmas and Thanksgiving.
- Parents are required to walk their child into the center and sign in on the Sign In/Sign Out Log. Parents are required to sign the child out in the same manner. If you have more than one child, they each need to be signed in and out on their individual pages. Please use full signatures only.
- A new registration form must be filled out yearly for each child. This form contains emergency phone numbers, medical information, and general information pertaining to the child. This form should be updated anytime there is a change in family information.

- All children must have at least one change of clothing, including underwear, labeled with their names. If your child does not have adequate clothing when needed, you may be called to bring clothing or to pick up your child. The center is not responsible for lost or damaged clothing.
- Infants need to have at least one change of clothing and a sufficient amount of disposable diapers and wipes.
- Parents are to furnish their child with blankets for napping (marked with child's name). Blankets need to go home on Fridays to be washed and returned on Mondays.
- Children should dress appropriately for the weather. Pointed boots, open toed sandals, flip-flops and crocs are not permitted as they are unsafe. If a child comes to the center wearing any of these, they will be sent home.
- Only those people specified on enrollment forms may pick up your child. They will need a picture ID.
- Method of payment for Pine's employees is through payroll deduction. There is a \$150.00 registration fee due upon enrollment and every August thereafter.
- Community families may pay by check, cash, money order, Visa, MasterCard or Discover. Child Care fees are due in advance on the Friday, prior to the week the child is attending. If fees are not paid by Tuesday morning of the current week, there will be a \$5.00 per day late charge. If fees are not received on Friday of the current week by 5:30 pm, the child may not return until fees are paid. There will be no exceptions to the late charges. If late payment arrangements are made the late charge is still effective.
- Toys, books, CD's, etc. belonging to your child may be misplaced or damaged at the center, so we ask that your child only bring these things in on "Show and Share" days which will be determined by your child's teacher. If your child requires a special toy for sleeping, it may be stored in his/her cubby until naptime. Children should not bring food to school (candy, gum, chips, etc.)
- No chewing gum while child is attending the center.
- Breakfast is served at 8:00 am. If your child arrives after 8:20 am, please make sure they are fed breakfast at home.
- Whenever an accident occurs, the child will be administered first aid and the parents will be notified in writing of the event the day it occurs.
- When bringing or picking up your child, please park in the employee or guest parking. The service driveway is for bus parking and delivery trucks only.
- In the event of a natural or man-made disaster, Pines of Sarasota will close to the public when Sarasota County closes the public schools, or when it is the best judgment of the management to close. The center will reopen when it is safe to do so.
- Pines of Sarasota Child Care is a Smoke Free Facility. No smoking is allowed on the premises. We request that parents extinguish all smoking materials prior to leaving their vehicles.

GRIEVANCE PRODEDURE

If you have a grievance with any of the procedures at the childcare center:

- Discuss your grievance with your child's teacher to resolve the problem

- If step #1 does not resolve your problem, discuss the problem with the childcare director.
- If steps #1 or #2 do not resolve the grievance, a conference will be scheduled with the President/CEO, the childcare director and yourself.

INCLUSION POLICY

The Learning Tree at Pines of Sarasota accepts all children from our community on a first come, first serve basis, with priority given to Pines employees.

The Learning Tree at Pines of Sarasota is Special Needs accessible.

The Learning Tree at Pines of Sarasota will make reasonable accommodations as needed for Special Needs children enrolled in the center, in compliance with the ADA.

Staff will be given specialized training in order to follow through on Individual Education Plans.

The Learning Tree at Pines of Sarasota welcomes therapy within its program for the children who need it.

The Learning Tree at Pines of Sarasota will work closely with families in order to best meet the needs of their children.

The staff of The Learning Tree at Pines of Sarasota will address the concerns of all the parents of the center in order to provide every child with quality care and education.

PROGRAM/CLASSROOM CHANGE POLICY

The Learning Tree at Pines of Sarasota recognizes that parents know their children the best. In accordance, we follow the parent's lead in determining how to introduce their child to our program, as well as the daily transition from home to school. The teachers and staff work closely with the parents to provide smooth and happy transitions, and willingly adapt our program to meet the needs of the child and family whenever possible.

The Learning Tree at Pines of Sarasota makes every effort to make the transition from one program or classroom to another as smooth and happy as possible for the child. We are a small school and the children form relationships with all the staff and teachers. We conference with the parents before deciding to make any changes. If the change is agreeable to all parties, the child then spends time "visiting" the new classroom. Only after the child is comfortable with the new program/classroom do we make the change permanent.

DISCIPLINE POLICY

Discipline is approached in a positive manner. Our goal is to help children develop self-control over their actions through a caring and loving atmosphere, consistent routine and a clear understanding of the rules. Discipline should not be equated with punishment; it is a positive learning experience using redirection, verbalization of feelings, limitations, consistency and thinking time (short separation from the group where appropriate). Corporal punishment is never administered.

REFERRAL POLICY

If there is a concern with a child's development, through observation, screenings and assessments, we will request a conference with the parent. Concerns will be discussed. Parents will be directed to the Warm Line if necessary. The Warm Line is a resource and referral program through Sarasota County that will assist parents in obtaining whatever help the child needs to thrive.

DISCHARGE/EXPULSION POLICY

The Learning Tree at Pines of Sarasota reserves the right to cancel the enrollment of a child for the following reasons:

- Nonpayment or excessive late payments of fees
- Not observing the rules of the center as outlined in the parent agreement
- Excessive absences
- Child has special needs which we cannot adequately meet with reasonable accommodations
- Physical and/or verbal abuse of staff or children by parent or child.
- Behavior that puts the child, other children and/or staff at risk of injury or harm. Please see REFERRAL POLICY above.

CHILD ABUSE AND NEGLECT POLICY

Under Florida law, Child Care workers are required to report to The Department of Children and Families any incidents of suspected child abuse and neglect.

"Child abuse is defined as including any non-accidental injury, sexual battery, financial or sexual exploitation or injury to the intellectual or psychological capacity of a person by the parents or other persons responsible for the child's welfare. Child neglect is failure to provide adequate food, clothing, shelter, healthcare or needed supervision."

BIRTHDAY PARTIES

We gladly celebrate your child's special day. Parents are invited to bring in an appropriate snack for after nap. Please limit other party items. Goodie bags must contain safe and age appropriate items. As always, parents are welcome to join us in celebrating birthdays. We will gladly distribute invitations to the children for at home parties as long as all the children in the class are invited.

HOLIDAY CELEBRATIONS

We ask that parents sign up for party goodies for our Halloween, Christmas, Valentine's Day and Easter parties. We encourage healthy snacks such as fruit trays, veggie trays, pretzels and 100% fruit juice. We also love to have cookies and cupcakes. Parents should limit the quantities of food brought in to what is requested on the sign-up sheet. We want everyone to have a chance to contribute.

ATTENDANCE POLICY

The Learning Tree at Pines of Sarasota recognizes parents as their children's first and most important teachers. As such, we honor parent's decisions regarding the attendance of their children at our school. However, in order to provide the best experience possible to the children, we ask parents to adhere to the following points regarding attendance:

We have a licensing regulation pertaining to attendance procedures:

"If a child does not arrive to the program or the agreed upon designated pick-up location, child care personnel must communicate as early as possible (within one hour of the child's scheduled arrival) with the custodial parent/legal guardian; if there was no prior communication from the custodial parent/legal guardian of the child's absence. If child care personnel are unable to reach the child's parent/guardian, emergency contacts must be notified".

This means that we must contact you if your child/ren do not come to school by their normal arrival time. If we cannot get a hold you, we must start calling your emergence contacts. All attempts must be documented.

If you know that your child will be absent, please let your child's teacher know. If your child is sick and will not attend, please call us first thing in the morning and leave a message to let us know.

We appreciate your cooperation in this matter.

- Upon enrollment, teachers and other staff will work with parents to assure the smoothest transition for the children to our program.
- We ask that children arrive no later than 9:00 am, well rested and fed if not in time for breakfast. Children in VPK need to be at school before 8:55 am during the school year.
- Breakfast is served at 8:00 am until 8:20 am.
- We ask parents to understand the need for consistency when making attendance decisions.
- It is understood that payment is due whether or not the child attends.
- Children receiving School Readiness funds are allowed three absences per month. Absences beyond the three days may become the financial responsibility of the parents.
- Upon arrival, children are to be signed in with the time of arrival and FULL SIGNATURES (no initials please). Upon departure, children are to be signed out with the time of departure and FULL SIGNATURES (no initials please).
- Parents of VPK students are required to adhere to the above sign in/out policy. Additionally, parents OF VPK students must sign the Parental Choice Certificate each month ON OR AFTER THE LAST SCHOOL DAY OF THE MONTH. The Parental Choice Certificates will be on the counters on the last day of each month.
- In the event a VPK student is absent for more than 3 days within a month, a note from the parent explaining the absence(s) is required.
- We respectfully request that parents notify us in the event of an absence.

We ask that parents make every effort to have the children attend our program with as much consistency as possible. If we feel that we are not meeting the needs of your child due to inconsistent attendance, you may be asked to find another center that can better meet your family's needs.

HEALTH POLICY

A "Student Medical Examination Form" and Florida Certificate of Immunization Form" must be supplied to the center before the child starts. These forms are completed by the child's physician and provide the center with the proper information about the child's immunizations.

Diarrhea: If it is not caused by prescription medication, the child must stay out of the center for 24 hours.

Fever: 100.6 ear, 99.6 under the arm. The child cannot return to the center until the temperature is below 100.6/99.6 for 24 hours.

Vomiting: If it happens more than once or the child also has abdominal pain, malaise, and low-grade fever, the child will be sent home.

Impetigo: Highly contagious, small blisters, filled with a thin yellow fluid. A crust is formed when the fluid drains. A child may return after being on prescription medication for 24 hours.

Pink Eye/Conjunctivitis: Swelling and redness of the white portion of the eye and/or lids and/or yellow discharge. This condition may last anywhere from several days up to three weeks. Child may not return to the center until released by a physician.

Scabies: Rash accompanied by severe itching at night. Thin burrow with blister caused by a parasite as it resembles eczema, measles, impetigo, etc. The child must be removed from the center, treated, and released by a physician.

Head Lice: One sign is persistent itch of the scalp, often accompanied by infected scratch marks on what appears to be a rash. Close inspection will reveal small silvery eggs attached to individual hairs. The child must be removed from the center and treated. Upon returning to the center, the child's head will be inspected by the director or a teacher. Children may return to school the next day, with proof that the head lice have been treated. The treatment box is acceptable proof. Children may not return to school the same day per current licensing regulations.

Rashes: Any unidentified rash will be considered contagious. Child may return with a physician's note.

Cold Symptoms: Children will not be sent home with normal cold symptoms; however, Pines Child Care reserves the right to send home a child with cold symptoms along with other symptoms such as fever, cough and/or green or yellow mucus discharge from the nose.

MEDICATION ADMINISTRATION POLICY

The Learning Tree at Pines of Sarasota will administer medication under the following conditions:

- Prescription medication only will be administered. We will administer over the counter medications WITH a prescription from the child's pediatrician.
- The prescription must be in the child's name, must be in the original container and be within the expiration period.
- Parents are to fill out "Authorization for Medication" form and give to child's teacher. The child's teacher will be responsible for giving the child the medication. Instructions are to be consistent with labeling on the medication.
- Staff will document the time medication is given, dosage and initial the "Authorization for Medication" form.

- For long-term prescription medications, parents are to fill out a new Authorization form each Monday.
- All medications will be kept in the locked cabinets in the kitchens. Medications that must be refrigerated will be kept in the refrigerators in the kitchens. Children do not have access to the kitchens.
- Completed "Authorization for Medication" forms are filed in the child's folder in the Director's office.

IN CASE OF EMERGENCIES

If an injury occurs that requires medical treatment, the child's parent/guardian will be called. If a child's parent cannot be reached, the child's physician will be called. The Director or designated person in charge will transport the child to his/her physician in the Pines van.

When an injury is very serious or life threatening, 911 will be called first, then the child's parents.

EMERGENCY PROCEDURES

TROPICAL SYSTEMS: The Learning Tree at Pines of Sarasota will follow the Sarasota County School's closures in the event a tropical system threatens our area. We will remain closed as long as the school system is closed. If a storm threatens during the summer, we will close upon the advice of the Sarasota County emergency Management System and Pines of Sarasota Senior Management. After the threat has passed, we will reopen as soon as possible. In the event of damage, we will reopen as soon as we can safely accommodate the children and families, as determined by Pines Senior Management and the Sarasota County Department of Health.

FIRE DRILLS: Fire drills are practiced monthly by all children and staff. This is done at different times of the day, to ensure a smooth evacuation at all time. The children from both buildings are evacuated to the covered walkways parallel to Orange Avenue. The buildings are checked to make sure they are empty. Attendance is taken immediately to ensure we account for all children and staff.

EVACUATIONS: In the event of the need to evacuate our premises, the children will be taken to our preschool building to the north or our thrift shop to the south, depending on the location of the danger. Staff will transport children's records and parents will be notified as soon as possible. Due to the large campus, we feel we can safely evacuate without taking children off campus. If it is necessary to move children farther, we will walk to our Thrift Shop on Orange Avenue and 10th Street.

All other emergency procedures are practiced annually by our staff. These include bomb threats and lock downs. If you have any questions regarding our emergency plans, please see the director.

MISSING CHILD POLICY

Our center has multiple procedures in place to account for the children in our care at all times. Attendance is taken at the beginning of the day. Teachers remain aware of the children who are present and the children who are absent. The parents of the children who are absent are called within one hour of the child's normal starting time if we have not been made aware of that child's absence. We encourage parents to call when children will not be attending.

Children are counted when leaving the classroom and before returning. Teachers also count multiple times during any activities and excursions the children may go on.

That being said, we have developed a plan for the unlikely event that a child is missing.

- Initially all bathrooms and any areas children can hide in, including under tables, are searched.
- Remaining children are placed with another adult. The search area will be expanded.
- Get as many people as possible involved in the search.
- After ten minutes without finding the child, police will be notified and informed of the child's name and description, including age, weight, height and an account of what the child is wearing.
- Parent will be notified of what is happening, what is being done and that they will be called with an update in a few minutes.
- When the child is found, the parents will be notified immediately and everyone involved will be alerted.
- As a follow up, the problem will be assessed and any changes will be made to avoid the risk of a similar incident.

PANDEMIC POLICY

Epidemic/Pandemic Emergency Plan

Epidemic: A widespread occurrence of an infectious disease in a community at a particular time.

“We are in the middle of a flu epidemic.”

Pandemic: A global outbreak of disease when a new virus emerges to infect people and can spread between people sustainably. Because there is no preexisting immunity, it spreads worldwide.

“The COVID-19 Virus has quickly become a pandemic as it spreads to many countries across the world.”

The Learning Tree at Pines of Sarasota practices and reinforces healthy hygiene practices routinely with staff and children. Staff is trained annually on Infection Control. Children are taught early on the proper handwashing techniques and handwashing is routine during our day. We follow the Department of Health Guidelines for exclusion of ill children and staff. The following policy pertains to a community epidemic/pandemic event.

In the event of minimal to moderate community transmission:

Staff and children will be screened daily prior to entering classrooms. Any student or staff member exhibiting symptoms of the disease will immediately be sent home. Until we are notified otherwise by The Department of Health, we will follow our existing policies for returning to school and work. If children become sick at school, they will be isolated as best we can until picked up.

Parents will be asked not to enter the building if exhibiting disease symptoms.

Parents will be asked to limit who is sent to pick up children.

Families will be given information regarding the disease and what protections need to be taken in order to keep families safe. Example: “Social Distancing” and keeping groups to ten or less.

If anyone has traveled to an area known to have transmission or has been in contact with a confirmed case of the disease they will be asked to self-isolate for a period of 14 days.

All extracurricular events will be cancelled, including intergenerational activities.

All events with large gatherings will be cancelled, i.e.: graduation, family breakfasts, children's programs.

Children and staff will not enter any resident areas.

Proper handwashing techniques will be reinforced.

Cleaning and disinfection practices will be intensified. This includes cleaning and sanitizing frequently touched areas and surfaces, toys, doorknobs, counters sink and toilet handles and light switches. EPA approved products that are safe around children will be used for cleaning, sanitizing and disinfecting.

Visitors will be either limited or restricted from visiting the campus. This will include extended family members and friends of the children and staff.

Absenteeism among staff and children will be monitored to identify large increases due to the symptoms of the disease. The Department of Health will be notified in that event.

We will do our best to maintain a maximum limit of 10 persons in an area at any given time.

The concept of "social distance" of 6 feet will be practiced by staff and taught to the children.

In the event of substantial community transmission:

The decision to remain open or to close Pines Child Care will be made by Pines Senior Management, in coordination with The Sarasota County Department of Health, The Office of Early Learning, The Early Learning Coalition and AHCA, their governing agency.

Pines of Sarasota reserves the right to close The Learning Tree at Pines of Sarasota to community parents and remain open to accommodate the children of employees who must work to take care of our residents.

If the center does remain open to employees, we will continue all efforts to prevent the transmission of the disease within our campus.

Any child or staff person sent home due to illness may be required to self-isolate at home for a minimum of 14 days, depending on the incubation/contagion of the disease.

In the event a confirmed case has entered the school:

The Sarasota County Health Department will be notified. The Pines of Sarasota Senior Management will be notified. The Early Learning Coalition will be notified as this event would be considered an "unusual occurrence".

Students and staff will be dismissed for a minimum of 2-5 days.

Families and staff will be given information to help make decisions that would best help minimize the spread of the disease.

Confidentiality regarding the person diagnosed will be strictly maintained as required by the American With Disabilities Act and the Family Education Rights and Privacy Act.

Remaining staff and children may be required to self-isolate for a minimum of 14 days.

Communications with families will be maintained.

DEVELOPMENTAL SCREENINGS AND ASSESSMENTS

The Learning Tree at Pines of Sarasota utilizes the Ages and Stages Questionnaire and The Ages and Stages Social/Emotional Questionnaire to track your child's development. These tools are used by the teacher with the help of the parents. Results of the screenings are shared with the parents during Parent/Teacher Conferences in September and May of each year. Copies of the results will be given to parents along with ideas of activities to do at home to help strengthen areas that need it. These screenings allow the teachers to plan according to the individual children's needs.

We also use the Creative Curriculum Continuum in partnership with the curriculum used in all the classrooms. Again, this assessment helps the teachers to plan activities supporting individual children's needs.

All children in Voluntary Pre-Kindergarten are assessed three times each school year using the Florida State issued VPK Assessment: September, January and May. This assessment allows teachers and parents to see the progress the VPK student makes during the school year. Results are shared with parents at Parent/Teacher conferences. As with the other screenings and assessments, results help teacher to plan individually for all students.

PARENT COMMUNICATION AND CONFERENCES

A daily report is sent home with every child at pick up time. Individual conferences are scheduled every September and May. All other conferences are to be scheduled by the parent at their time convenience. Parents may call teachers between 12:30 pm and 2:15 pm at 552-1861 (Infant/Toddler Building) or 365-0250, Extension 2907 (Preschool Building).

PARENT EVALUATIONS

The Learning Tree at Pines of Sarasota welcomes input and suggestions from parents any time. Every January a formal evaluation will be given to each family. This will be a written evaluation on the program asking each family of their child's needs are being met.

CHARACTER DEVELOPMENT

The Learning Tree at Pines of Sarasota provides activities that enhance the social and emotional development of the children enrolled in our program. We utilize a variety of methods including The Kindness Curriculum, team building within the classrooms, anger management techniques and conflict resolution techniques. We also engage in intergenerational activities with the residents of The Pines of

Sarasota which fosters empathy, compassion and caring for others. The caring for pets within the classrooms also helps to develop caring and compassion as well as responsibility.

LITERACY

The Learning Tree at Pines of Sarasota recognizes that a strong Literacy component within an early childhood program is an important factor in the future academic success of students. Our curriculum supports this concept throughout the program at all age levels.

We encourage family literacy. Parents are encouraged to read to their children daily. Flyers are sent home notifying families of community literacy events.

Family members are welcome any time to come in and read to their children's classes.

FOOD AND NUTRITION POLICY

The Learning Tree at Pines of Sarasota provides nutritious and wholesome food for breakfast, lunch and afternoon snack. We follow the nutrition guidelines from the USDA Child Care Food Program. Our dietary department prepares the food in an approved and annually inspected facility kitchen. All dietary staff is trained in food safety. Weekly menus are posted in both buildings.

We provide alternate food if children are sensitive or allergic. In the case of a severe allergy, that particular food will be banned from our center as long as the allergic child is registered and attending our center. We honor parent preferences regarding what they want their children to eat.

Any food brought from home for parties or events must be store bought and in its original, unopened packaging.

If food brought in is meant to be refrigerated, it must arrive adequately cold. Staff will store it in the refrigerator immediately.

We cannot accept homemade baked goods, or fruit and veggies cut up at home. Whole fruit and veggies may be brought in. Staff will cut it up here.

This policy is in accordance with our licensing regulations.

POTTY TRAINING

Every child develops at his/her own pace. Toilet training readiness is no different than any other aspect of your child's development. When they are ready, it will happen! Our teachers and staff work closely with the parents in determining the right time to begin toilet training. Both parents and teachers keep a close watch for signs of readiness which include staying dry for longer periods of time, showing an interest in the toilet and being able to remove clothing with little help. When the parents and teacher feel the time is right, potty training begins at home and at school at the same time. Parents are asked to bring in several changes of clothing. Be prepared to do lots of laundry! Accidents are dealt with matter of factly. The child is never shamed or scolded for having an accident.

Some children potty train quickly while others may take much longer. Patience is key. Accidents happen and should never be dealt with harshly.

Some children who have been potty trained for a while may revert back to having accidents. This is normal and should be dealt with calmly. We ask that parent of all the children make sure there is adequate extra clothing in their child's cubby. It is much less embarrassing to the child if we have clothing to make them comfortable again.

Being toilet trained is not a factor in deciding which classroom a child would do best in. Your child will be placed in his/her age appropriate group. The teachers will work with the parents on any developmental issues children may have, including potty training. Remember, very few children go to college in diapers!

INFANT/TODDLER PHYSICAL ACTIVITY POLICY

Our goal is to be a "Healthy Sarasota" Child Care site. As such, we encourage our infants and toddlers in developmentally appropriate physical activity for at least 60-90 minutes per day. These activities include the following: For infants, tummy time several times a day, opportunities for rolling, scooting, crawling and walking, push toys, ball, ramps, mats and opportunity to explore the outdoors safely at least twice per day, weather permitting. For toddlers, activities include: wheeled toys balls, hoops, dancing, age appropriate climbing equipment and outdoor exploration 60 to 90 minutes per day, weather permitting.

Infant/Toddler Teachers are required to provide physical activities that promote the physical development of the children. The activities include encouragement in reaching, sitting, standing, crawling and walking for infants. For toddlers, teachers must encourage children to be active and join in the active play.

PETS IN THE CLASSROOMS

The teachers and staff firmly believe that taking care of animals fosters responsibility, empathy and caring. We are proud caregivers of hamsters and fish. The occasional rabbit and Guinea Pig have also found a home with us.

ENRICHMENT ACTIVITIES

As part of our Intergenerational programming the children participate in activities outside their classrooms that enrich their educational experiences. These activities may include horticulture, drama, art, music and programs with Chucko the Clown from Circus Sarasota. All instructors are level two background screened and are experienced in working with children.