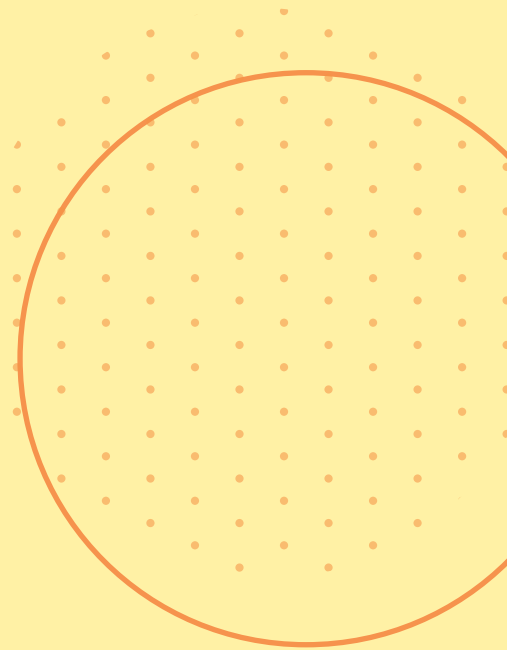




# PARENT HANDBOOK



# Contents

## SECTION 1

### About Us **3**

*Welcome to Growing Kids Learning Centers* **4**

*Mission Statement* **5**

Our Purpose 5

Our Values 5

## SECTION 2

### Care and Education **7**

*Introduction to Our Philosophy and Program* **8**

Description of Services 9

Children with Disabilities 9

A Typical Day at Growing Kids 10

Teachers and Staffing 10

Classroom Management and Discipline 11

Parent Involvement 11

Potty Training 12

Pets 12

## SECTION 3

### Health and Safety **13**

*Food* **14**

Meals Provided 14

Special Diets 14

Bringing Food into the Centers 15

Nut Free Centers 15

Celebrating Birthdays 15

*Health* **16**

Illness 16

What to Bring and Wear to School 16

Special Notes for Parents of Infants, Toddlers, and

Young Preschoolers 17

Injuries 18

*Medication* **18**

Allergies and Medical Restrictions 18

Handwashing 19

*Safety and Security* **19**

Front Door Access Only 19

Locked Front Door 19

Computer Sign In/Out and Tickets 19

Authorized Pick-Up People 20

Adding/Changing Authorized Pick Up People 20

Reporting Suspicious Activity 20

Code of Conduct 21

Firearms/Weapons 22

Film/Photograph/Video Release 22

Field Trips and Transportation 22

After-School Care Transportation 22

Prohibited Substances 22

Child Abuse and Neglect 23

## SECTION 4

### Enrollment and Tuition **24**

*Application and Enrollment Process* **25**

Enrollment Forms and Your Child's File 25

Shared/Joint Custody 26

Confidentiality 26

Cell Phone/Recording Devices 26

*Tuition and Hours of Operation* **27**

Annual Registration Fee 27

Tuition and Fees 27

Subsidized Tuition Programs 27

Returned Payment Fees 27

Late Pick Up Fees 27

Children Left After 6:00 p.m. 28

Absences and Illness 28

Operating Days and Scheduled Holidays 28

Emergency Closings 29

Ending Care 29

## SECTION 5

### Final Thoughts **30**

*Additional Comments and Questions* **31**

# SECTION 1

## About Us



# Welcome to Growing Kids Learning Centers

Dear Parents,

Welcome to Growing Kids Learning Centers. We provide early childhood education for children 6 weeks through elementary school age. Our goal is to provide the highest quality education in a nurturing learning environment where your child can develop confidence, independence, and a sense of curiosity.

We believe that children feel more secure and that we can be better educators when there is a strong connection between home and school. We encourage parent involvement in the centers. Parent suggestions, comments, and participation are welcomed.

This Parent Handbook has been prepared to provide important information about the centers' policies and procedures. Please take a moment to read the handbook as it will help ensure your child's smooth transition into our program, and it will be a useful reference in the future.

Sincerely,

Beth and Mike Garatoni  
Founders  
Phone: 574-273-2778  
Garatoni@growingkids.com



# Mission Statement

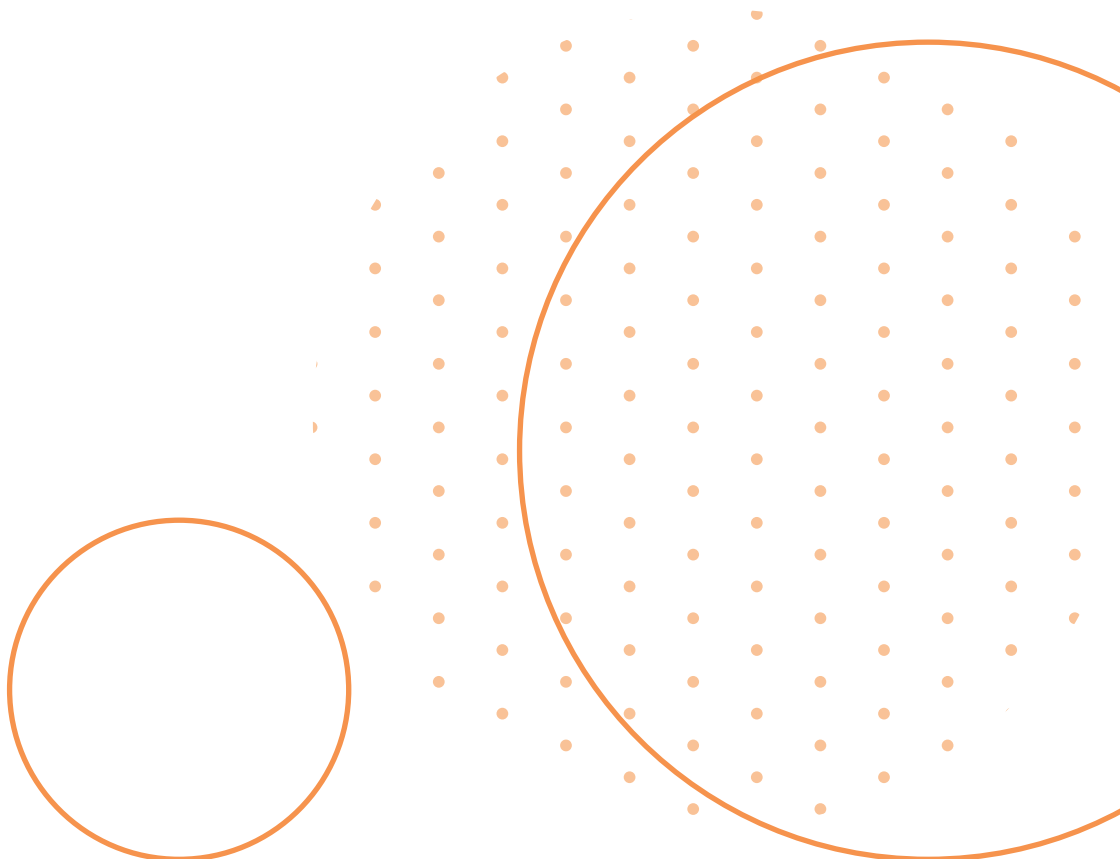
## Our Purpose

The purpose of Growing Kids is to *Protect, Educate and Inspire* young children.

- We protect children in all ways by providing an environment that is safe for them physically, emotionally, socially, and intellectually. We protect children by preparing for what might happen as well.
- We educate children by providing a thoughtfully prepared learning environment that is developmentally appropriate, using our nationally recognized curriculum.
- We inspire children by providing a wide range of learning opportunities to support each child as their unique interests and talents develop. We don't know which opportunities will be the ones that spark a child's interest, so we continue to offer many.

## Our Values

Growing Kids is a *values-driven* organization. The Growing Kids Family Values are described in detail on the next page.





# FAMILY VALUES

The Values We Live By At **Growing Kids**

## SAFETY



- Ensure the security of children, parents and staff.
- Meet or exceed all licensing, accreditation, and company standards.
- Never compromise safety in decision-making.
- Anticipate and prepare for what could happen.

## TRUST



- Communicate clearly, directly, and frequently.
- Do what you say and say what you do.
- Be honest, dependable and reliable.
- Take responsibility for personal and company performance.

## FAMILY



- Model a healthy balance in life.
- Care about others as complete people, not just as staff members or customers.
- Be thankful, patient and forgiving.
- Have fun and laugh together.

## SERVICE



- Take care of the needs of others.
- Be respectful and courteous to all.
- Treat others as you want to be treated.
- Be a good steward of time, resources, and opportunities.

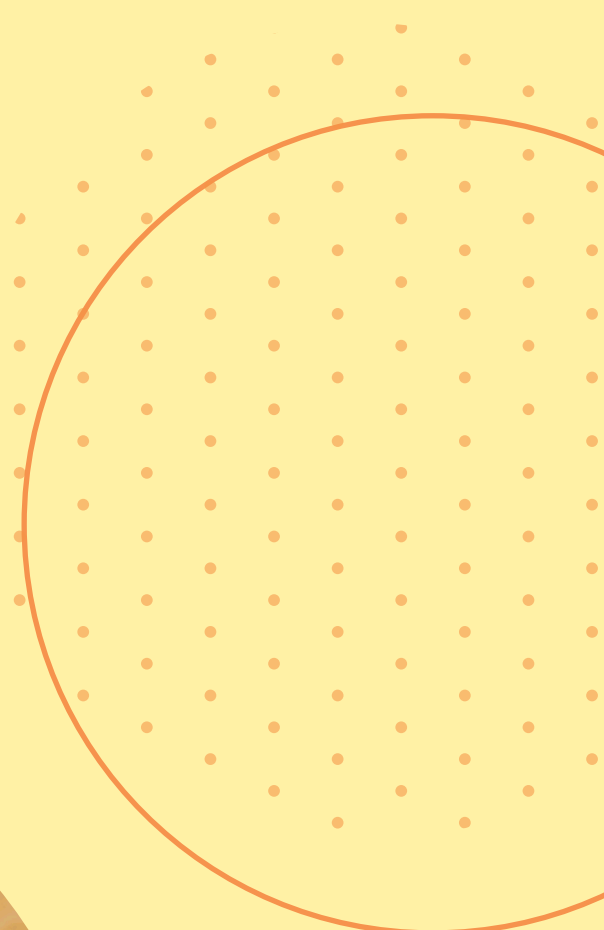
## EXCELLENCE



- Consistently exceed expectations.
- Model and encourage continuous improvement.
- Be enthusiastic and happy.
- Convert a negative situation into a positive experience.

# SECTION 2

## Care and Education



# Introduction to Our Philosophy and Program

Growing Kids Learning Centers provides care for children 6 weeks of age through elementary school in bright, cheerful surroundings, specifically designed for active, educational play. We believe, as most child experts do, that children of this age learn best through play – where learning is enjoyable.

**Growing Kids Learning Centers offers a traditional play-based learning approach where children learn through hands-on activities.** Our classrooms create a child-centered environment where exploration is encouraged. Children engage and interact through periods of structured and unstructured activities, enabling them to progress at their own pace. Teachers acknowledge learning as an active process constructed in between what children already know (their prior knowledge) and what they will learn (new knowledge).

Our staff creates a learning environment that is developmentally appropriate for each age group, encouraging and challenging each child to achieve their personal best. Our goal is to help each child develop self-confidence, independence, and curiosity.

Our program uses learning centers to give each child the opportunity to explore and move through

specially designed learning areas at their own pace. Activities are balanced between those that are teacher-directed and child-directed. Each learning center is introduced to the children as it becomes developmentally appropriate. Our learning centers include:

- Sensory Play
- Music & Movement
- Main Street Play Area
- Math & Manipulatives
- Science & Discovery
- Nutrition
- Dramatic Play
- Art
- Language Arts: Literacy & Language
- Writing Centers
- Blocks
- Table Top Games
- Quiet Area & Books
- Outdoor Play Area
- Woodworking

Growing Kids Learning Centers is a state licensed childcare center. We operate these centers to meet or exceed all state and local regulation by being Level 4 Paths of Quality and being nationally accredited by NECPA (National Early Childhood Program





Accreditation). Our service is organized into six groups. Children are placed in a group based on the child's age and stage of development.

## Description of Services

### *Infant Care*

Care for children 6 weeks old until one year of age and walking. State ratio is 1 teacher for every 4 children present. (Infant Care hours—7:00am until 6:00pm)

### *Toddler Care*

Care for children over the age of one and walking to 24 months. State ratio is 1 teacher for every 5 children present.

### *Young Preschool*

Care for children at least 24 months to 3 years old and potty trained. State ratio is 1 teacher for every 5 children present.

### *Preschool*

Care for children 3 years old and potty trained through 5 years. Our preschoolers are generally grouped into classes of 3–4-year-olds and 4–5-year-olds. For the 3–4 age group, the ratio is 1 teacher for every 10 children present. For the 4–5 age group, the ratio is 1 teacher for every 12 children present.

### *Before and After School Care*

Before and after school care for elementary age children. Transportation to and from elementary schools may be available by the school or by Growing Kids. The center director can confirm availability. The staff ratio is 1 teacher for every 15 children present.

### *School-Age Camp*

Care for children whenever elementary school is closed, including Winter / Summer / Spring breaks, and all the minor days off in between (conferences,

teacher days, etc.) Care is not available on the days that Growing Kids is closed.

*\*\*Please check with your center to ensure we can accommodate your child's school calendar.*

## Children with Disabilities

We are committed to providing an inclusive environment where all children, regardless of their abilities, are welcomed and supported. Should a child's care requirements exceed the scope of our program, training, or safety protocols, we work collaboratively with families, specialists, and community resources to provide individualized support and accommodation whenever possible, promoting a sense of belonging and respect.

Prior to allowing any outside services providers into the program as a reasonable accommodation, the parent(s) and center director need to meet to coordinate services. While Growing Kids staff cannot evaluate, test, or diagnose for a disability, the assessment and evaluation tools we use can be used as the basis for a referral to outside support services.



## A Typical Day at Growing Kids

### *Arrival and Departure*

Children are checked in and out at the front desk using a biometric fingerprint reader that generates an in/out ticket. The parents take their child(ren) to their assigned classroom and notify the teacher they are dropping off or picking up by handing the in/out ticket directly to the teacher. This is safer and more comfortable for the children than being left in the lobby to find their own way and is an added safety measure to ensure teachers have accurate attendance of children checked in or out of the classroom.

Each child has a cubby drawer and a mailbox. Parents should check both daily, as they contain art projects, notices, and any soiled clothing that needs to be cleaned.

### *Rest and Quiet Periods*

The children in the infant classroom sleep in cribs on their own sleep schedule. All other children sleep on cots during rest time from 12:30–2:30pm daily. The cots are a minimum of two feet apart, and each child is positioned in the opposite direction as the child next to them. The children may wake up on their own. If a child does not fall asleep after thirty minutes, they will be provided with alternative activities.

## Teachers and Staffing

The quality of the service we provide depends upon our staff. Each staff member is dedicated to providing a learning environment that challenges and encourages each child. Backgrounds can include bachelor's degrees, associates degrees, CDAs, previous teaching experience, knowledge gained from being parents, and/or on the job training. Before joining the Growing Kids' staff, each applicant completes a screening and review process and passes a criminal history check. Only the most qualified teachers are selected. Upon hire, all staff members complete the Growing Kids Professional Development program as well as Universal Precautions, First Aid, and CPR. The Growing Kids training requirements exceed Indiana State Licensing regulations. All staff members participate in a minimum of 24 continuing education and training hours per year.

When your child's regular teacher is unavailable due to illness, vacation, etc., other trained Growing Kids staff members will cover the classroom.



## Classroom Management and Discipline

We believe that discipline is the personal development of self-control and the awareness of appropriate and inappropriate behavior. We believe that the most effective methods to teach self-control and appropriate behavior are to provide an interesting and engaging lesson and to provide positive reinforcement and praise for desirable behavior. This includes the proper establishment of limits, expectations, and role modeling. Teachers will offer further guidance through re-direction, discussion, or ignoring the inappropriate behavior. Decision-making and natural consequences are used whenever possible.

Growing Kids Learning Centers follows the positive discipline approach. State licensing prohibits any form of physical discipline, humiliation, abusive language, or discipline related to food or toilet training.

## Parent Involvement

We believe that a close relationship between the parents and school is in the best interest of each child. A close relationship improves communication, provides greater consistency between home and school, and fosters a greater sense of security for the child. Outlined below are some of the activities at Growing Kids where parents can be involved.

- Parent / Teacher conferences are scheduled in the fall and spring.
- Posted Lesson Plans inform parents about weekly class themes and their child's daily activities.
- Parent Bulletin Boards in all the classrooms and the front lobby are a convenient way to keep up to date on the events and news in the school.
- Each child has a Mail Folder for letters or art projects to go home.
- Communication with parents is shared through the online parent engagement app. Each family has an account for their child, where the teachers make frequent updates with events and information about your child's day.
- In class events are scheduled throughout the year. These are opportunities for parents to enjoy a special snack or "party" with their child. These include events like Mother's Day, Father's Day, Valentine's Day, etc.
- All School Events are designed to foster a sense of community among all enrolled families at the centers. We have four major events:
  - Halloween Fun House
  - Winter Holiday Program
  - Spring Fling and Egg Hunt
  - Summer Party

The director and staff are always ready to have a discussion about your child or answer questions. If the person you would like to speak with is busy or unavailable, please feel free to schedule an appointment.



## Potty Training

Learning to use the toilet is a big event in a young child's life. Because potty training is a complex process, there are many things caregivers and families must consider before and during the process of potty training for it to be a successful experience for everyone. When this time comes, the teachers and parents will work together on this process. Potty training is a big skill to learn. Be patient. Let the child

decide when he/she is ready. If you do, the child will most likely be trained in a very short period of time.

## Pets

We love pets! Classrooms may have pets as permitted by state licensing and national accreditation standards. However, please do not bring your personal pets into the Center.



# SECTION 3

## Health and Safety



# Food

## Meals Provided

Growing Kids provides breakfast, lunch, and two snacks daily, depending on the child's attendance schedule. Our menus are designed to provide balanced nutrition to develop good life-long eating habits in all children. Growing Kids' menus, mealtimes, and food service processes are regulated by Indiana State Licensing regulations and the Federal Child and Adult Care Food Program (CACFP). Weekly menus are posted on the Parent Information Board in the lobby and in the classrooms.

- Children in attendance before 7:30 a.m. will be served a morning snack.
- Breakfast will be served at 9:00 a.m.
- Lunch will be served between 11:00 a.m. and 11:30 a.m.
- Afternoon snack is served after rest time between 2:30 p.m. and 3:00 p.m.

In accordance with Indiana State Licensing regulations and CACFP, we are not able to provide meals or snacks outside of the times listed above.

## Special Diets

Growing Kids Learning Centers participates in the Federal Child and Adult Care Food Program (CACFP). Please speak with the front desk or center director to discuss special diets or restrictions and ensure the Special Dietary Needs Form is completed before your child's first day.

### *CACFP Nondiscrimination Statement*

In accordance with federal civil rights law and U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) civil rights regulations and policies, this institution is prohibited from discriminating on the basis of race, color, national origin, sex (including gender identity and sexual orientation), disability, age, or reprisal or retaliation for prior civil rights activity.

Program information may be made available in languages other than English. Persons with disabilities who require alternative means of communication to obtain program information (e.g., Braille, large print, audiotope, American Sign Language), should contact the responsible state or local agency that administers the program or USDA's TARGET Center at (202) 720-2600 (voice and TTY) or contact USDA through the Federal Relay Service at (800) 877-8339.

To file a program discrimination complaint, a Complainant should complete a Form AD-3027, USDA Program Discrimination Complaint Form which can be obtained online at: <https://www.usda.gov/sites/default/files/documents/ad-3027.pdf>, from any USDA office, by calling (866) 632-9992, or by writing a letter addressed to USDA. The letter must contain the complainant's name, address, telephone number, and a written description of the alleged discriminatory action in sufficient detail to inform the Assistant Secretary for Civil Rights (ASCR) about the nature and date of an alleged civil rights violation. The completed AD-3027 form or letter must be submitted to USDA by:

- 1. mail:**  
U.S. Department of Agriculture  
Office of the Assistant Secretary for Civil Rights  
1400 Independence Avenue, SW  
Washington, D.C. 20250-9410; or
- 2. fax:**  
(833) 256-1665 or (202) 690-7442; or
- 3. email:**  
[Program.Intake@usda.gov](mailto:Program.Intake@usda.gov)

This institution is an equal opportunity provider.

## Bringing Food into the Centers

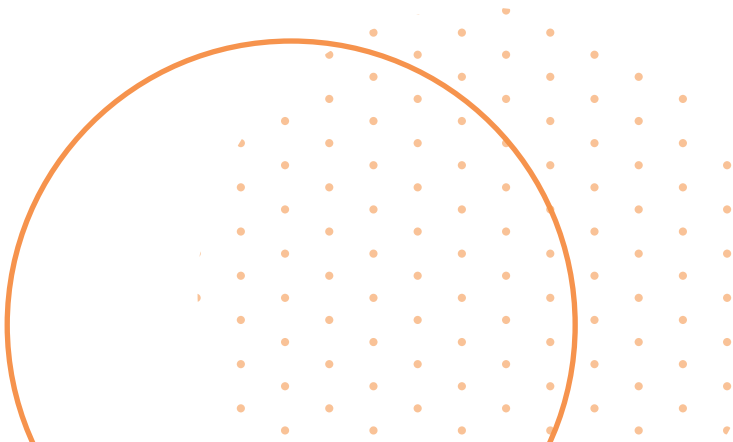
Any food brought into the centers must be from a state-licensed kitchen (i.e. purchased from a store), unopened, and in the original container. We generally discourage any outside food being brought into the centers, unless for pre-arranged menu substitutions, birthday parties, or other special events. Please see the director for more details.

## Nut Free Centers

Growing Kids does not serve nut products due to the extreme nature of allergic reactions to nuts and products containing nuts. Parents are responsible for providing foods that are nut and nut product free for their child's lunch and/or snack if they are providing their child's food due to a medical necessity. There are many acceptable food items that are nut free in stores.

## Celebrating Birthdays

Birthdays are special and we like to celebrate each child's birthday in the classroom. If you would like to do something additional for your child's birthday, please talk with the center director or your child's teacher, as we need to follow Indiana State licensing regulations. Only commercially prepared food is allowed in the centers (i.e. store bought). Home-made food is not allowed.



# Health

The good health of the children and staff is important. Our staff receives training in First Aid, CPR, and Universal Precautions. The children are taught basic hygiene as part of their regular activities. Each child is required to have a current physical examination report and immunization record completed by a physician.

## Illness

Please **DO NOT** bring your child to school when they are ill. Our program is not designed to provide care for ill children. In the event that your child develops symptoms of illness during the day, we will isolate the child from the other children and call the parents **immediately** to pick up the child within one hour.

### *When NOT to bring your child to school*

The conditions for keeping your child at home for routine illness or something more serious has been incorporated into our illness policy. More information is available under Parent Resources at [www.growingkids.com](http://www.growingkids.com).

Ill children who are sent home may be asked to bring a doctor's permission slip to return to school. Children must be symptom free for at least 24 hours before returning to school to reduce the chance of illness spreading.

If your child is diagnosed with a contagious illness, please notify the office immediately so that we can contact other parents whose children may have been exposed. Notes will be sent home through the parent engagement app to notify parents of potential exposures.

## What to Bring and Wear to School

### *Clothing*

- Clothing is required to be worn by all children, including a top, a bottom, and closed toe shoes. The clothing must be appropriate for the child's age. All clothing should be comfortable and suitable for play. As part of your child's daily learning activities, they will participate in messy activities including art, outdoor play, water play, sensory play, etc. The children are having fun learning, so please dress them in play clothing.
  - Please provide seasonal clothing, including a hat, coat, gloves, and boots. Outdoor activities are a regular part of the day, even during the winter. Please send clothes accordingly.
- All children should have at least 2 changes of clothes in their cubby drawer. If a child needs to be changed and has no clean clothes on hand, we will call the parents.





- For rest time, a blanket and small pillow should be provided. Rest time blankets and any other bedding provided is sent home on Fridays to be laundered and returned on Monday.
  - School-age children typically don't nap.

### *Personal Toys*

- Avoid bringing personal toys to school. While children often want to bring their favorite toy to school, it is best to leave them at home or in the car.

### *Outdoor Activities*

- Outdoor activities are a regular part of our program except for days with rain, heat index alerts, wind chill advisories, and air quality alerts. We are required by Indiana State Licensing regulations to go outside when the temperature and wind-chill is above 25 degrees. Please send the appropriate clothing, especially a hat, coat, gloves, snowpants, and boots on the colder days.
- Playing outside allows children to grow socially, helping them to develop healthy ways of forming friendships, responding to physical interaction, and using imagination. Being outdoors offers children the freedom to move on a large scale and be active, noisy, and messy. Children can use all their senses outdoors by exploring and expressing their feelings and ideas. Spending time outdoors daily helps keep children fit and physically healthy.

## Special Notes for Parents of Infants, Toddlers, and Young Preschoolers

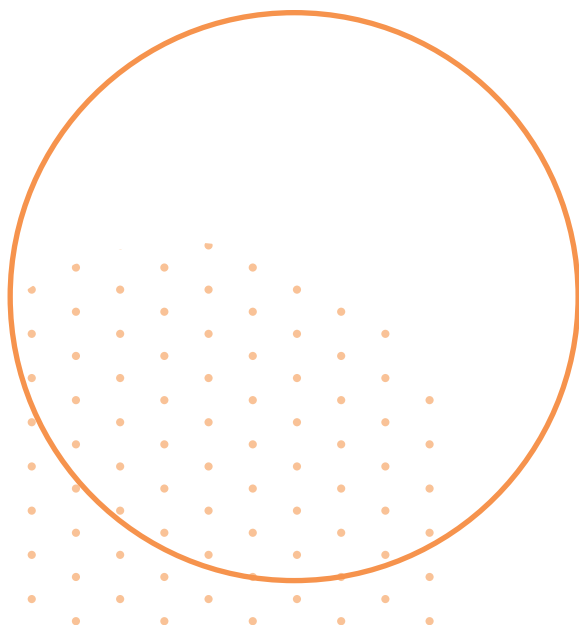
These students require a few additional items to be brought from home.

- Diapers and Wipes - Must be brought in original, unopened packaging.
- Diaper / Rash Ointments. Please follow the medication policy in the next section.
- Extra changes of clothing in case of accidents.
- Naptime
  - Crib sheets will be provided in the infant room by Growing Kids.
  - Parents are responsible to provide rest time blankets for children ages 1 and older. Each child should have a small blanket and pillow. A fitted crib sheet will fit the rest time cots if you choose to provide one.
- The center provides ready-to-feed formula, baby food, and table food when appropriate. Child Care regulations prohibit powdered formula. Infants must also have a completed feeding plan signed by their doctor.

No diaper bags are allowed in the infant or toddler rooms. Indiana Child Care regulations specifically prohibit diaper bags in the rooms. Diaper bags can be used to bring items from the car to the infant or toddler room door.

### *Safe Sleep Requirements*

Growing Kids follows all Safe Sleep requirements for infants. Parents of infant children will sign a Safe Sleep Parent Letter when completing enrollment paperwork. All Growing Kids staff members who work in the infant classrooms are trained on Safe Sleep procedures annually and sign the Growing Kids' Safe Sleep Policy and Procedure.



## Injuries

Parents are notified in writing of all minor injuries (bumps, scrapes, etc.) that may occur during the day. With a more serious injury, we will call the parents as soon as possible. In the unlikely occurrence that emergency medical care is necessary, we will first attempt to contact the parents and/or other emergency contacts. If we cannot contact any of these people, we will take your child to the hospital for treatment.



## Medication

Growing Kids will dispense medications during the day only with parental permission, in accordance with Indiana State Licensing regulations. Prescription and non-prescription (over-the-counter) items alike require written approval by a physician. Prescription items must be in their original container with the original prescription label showing the child's name, medication name, physician's name, date, and directions for use. Prescriptions cannot be over 1 year old. Non-prescription items (including cough medicine, Tylenol, diaper ointment, etc.) must be accompanied by a doctor's note indicating the child's name, medication, and directions for use. When medicine is brought in, please complete the Medication Log at the front desk on each day the medicine is to be given.

## Allergies and Medical Restrictions

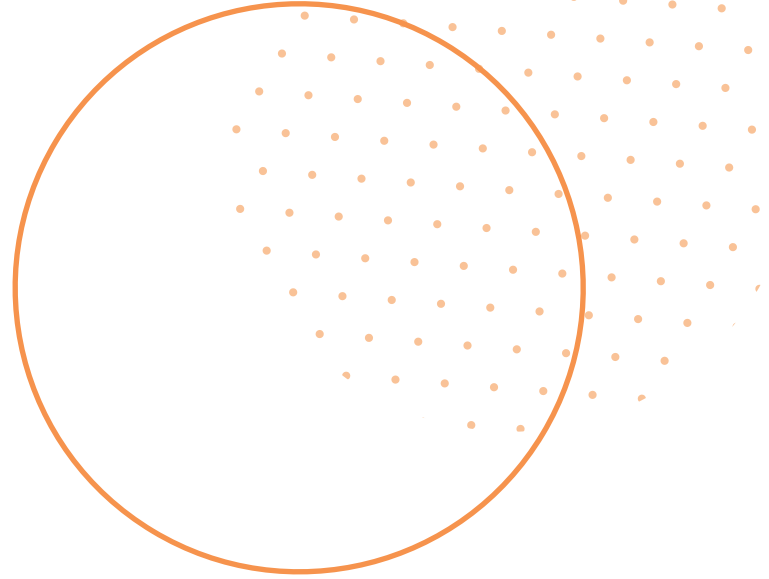
If your child has any allergies or medical restrictions, please notify us with a note from your doctor. Allergy notices should include the allergy and a description of the reaction.

For the safety of your child, parents are required to provide necessary documentation, detailing any allergies, food or otherwise, their child may have at the time of enrollment or when the allergy is discovered. Parents must provide updated information every six months or more frequently if needed. Parents must provide a copy of any additional physician's orders and procedural guidelines relating to exposure prevention and treatment of the child's allergy.

Growing Kids cannot guarantee that a child with a severe allergy will not encounter the allergen while at the centers. Upon being informed of a child having a life-threatening allergy, the center will work with staff to develop classroom and/or center-wide procedures to prevent, as reasonably as possible, the child from coming into contact with their allergen.

## Handwashing

Proper and frequent hand washing is the easiest and most effective way to prevent the spread of illness and disease in childcare. **Hand washing is required!** Using the proper procedure and washing hands frequently can prevent the spread of the common cold, flu, and food borne illness as well as many other germs.



## Safety and Security

The safety and security of the children is essential. Our building and operating practices are designed to help ensure this. As a parent, you deserve peace of mind. Thanks to top-tier safety measures designed by a childcare security company run by former Secret Service Agents, your little one stays safe and secure from the moment you drop them off. To make these safety measures as effective as possible, we require the help and cooperation of the parents.

### Front Door Access Only

The front door is the only permitted entrance into the centers. All other doors in the centers are locked from the outside and should not be used. This also includes our exterior playground gates.

### Locked Front Door

Our front door is locked at all times. Each parent and their authorized pick-up people are given a personal code to open the front door. This code is not to be shared with anyone. Everyone else should ring the doorbell. We do not mind answering the doorbell for the infrequent pick-up person. Please do not hold the door open or let someone into the centers. It is better to ask a Growing Kids staff member for assistance than to allow an unauthorized person to enter the building.

### Computer Sign In/Out and Tickets

We make use of a computer sign in/out system to monitor attendance. On your first day at the center, the center director or front office staff will show you how to use the check-in kiosk. A paper ticket is printed upon successfully checking a child in or out. The check-in ticket should be presented to the classroom teacher at drop off and pick up, as proof of authorization.

Children are required to be escorted by their parent, or the adult dropping them off, to their designated classroom. Once a parent signs their child out, the parent is then solely responsible for supervising their child while in the center. The parent may not allow a child to wander through the hallways, bathrooms, other classrooms, or playground. Parents are asked to handle all business issues prior to signing out their child and to directly exit the building once they have signed their child out of care.

## Authorized Pick-Up People

At enrollment, parents will be required to complete an Authorized Pick-Up List in the enrollment packet. Parents are encouraged to include any and all persons who may be asked to pick up their child. In an emergency situation, the child's parents will be called first. If they cannot be reached, staff will call the people listed on this form until someone can be contacted. It is important that this information be kept current.

Should the staff contact a parent and the parent is unable to pick up the child, it is then the responsibility of the parent to arrange for their child to be picked up by someone on the emergency list.

**We frequently ask for identification.** Please do not be insulted. We do it for the safety of the children.

*By law, we cannot release a child to any person who appears intoxicated, under the influence of drugs / medication or is otherwise impaired. If this occurs, we will contact someone else on the authorized pick-up list to come and pick up the child. If a person suspected of being impaired insists on picking up the child, Growing Kids staff members are required to call the local police.*

## Adding/Changing Authorized Pick Up People

Adding or changing authorized pick-up people is best done in person or in writing. If it must be done over the phone, Growing Kids office staff will only accept a verbal addition/change if one of the following conditions can be met.

1. The staff member recognizes the caller as the child's parent or other guardian.
2. The staff member can call the child's parent at a location already on file (home or work). If unavailable, we will try other people listed on the Authorization sheet for their approval.

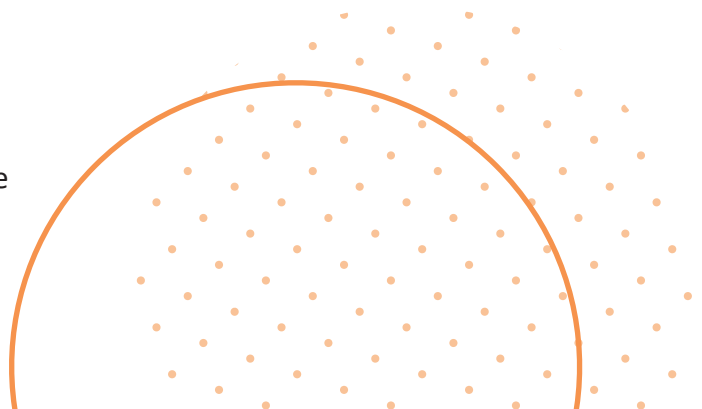
## Reporting Suspicious Activity

Any suspicious activity or persons around the centers should be reported to the director or other staff immediately.

Growing Kids believes the same level of security that protects the president of the United States should be called upon to keep your child safe. That's why we partnered with Secure Education Consultants, a company owned and operated by former US Secret Service Agents, to help us take our safety and security to the highest level possible. Secure Education Consultants is a group of highly skilled security and protection experts who specialize in analyzing child care centers, developing emergency preparedness plans, and preparing faculty and staff to appropriately confront emergencies of all kinds.

We have taken other precautions to help ensure the safety of the children and improve each parent's sense of security.

- Each center has an Emergency Response Plan.
- Routine fire, tornado, and lock down/emergency drills.
- Building fire and alarm systems that exceed state requirements.
- Large interior windows and closed-circuit cameras.
- Phones in every room, so that staff do not have to leave the children to be accessible by phone.
- Most electrical and mechanical equipment is located outside the building, reducing the need for outside repairmen to enter classroom areas.



# Code of Conduct

Growing Kids requires the parents/guardians and authorized pick-up/emergency contact persons of enrolled children to conduct themselves in a manner consistent with decency, courtesy, and respect. Achieving this ideal environment is not only the responsibility of Growing Kids staff but is the responsibility of each and every parent/guardian and adult who enters the centers. Parents/guardians and all adults are required to behave in a manner that fosters this environment.

## *Parent Code of Conduct*

### **1. Respectful Communication**

- Parents are expected to communicate respectfully with teachers, staff, and other parents. We welcome feedback and concerns from parents but expect all concerns and disagreements to be addressed calmly and constructively. Constructive dialogue is essential for resolving conflicts and ensuring the child's best interest. Aggressive or confrontational behavior, including threats of any kind, directed at any child, staff person, parent, family, or any person associated with Growing Kids will not be tolerated.

### **2. Confidentiality**

- Parents must respect the privacy of all children, families, and staff. Sharing personal information about other children or families without consent or sharing defamatory or inaccurate information about the centers or staff members is prohibited. This includes discussions in person, over the phone, or on social media.

### **3. Appropriate Language**

- Using offensive or inappropriate language, including swearing, in the centers or in the presence of children, staff, or other parents is unacceptable. Maintaining a positive and respectful environment is essential.

### **4. Safety and Security**

- Safety and security are of utmost importance for Growing Kids. Parents must follow all safety and security measures established by the center. This includes procedures for drop off and pick up, emergency protocols, and any other safety guidelines.

### **5. Supportive Environment / Collaboration and Involvement**

- Parents are encouraged to be actively involved in their child's care and collaborate with the center staff for their child's welfare. Parents should keep the center informed of any changes in their child's circumstances that may affect their behavior or well-being. Working together is in the child's best interest.

### **6. Support for Diversity**

- Parents are expected to respect the diverse cultures, lifestyles, and parenting choices within the centers' community. This helps create an inclusive and supportive environment for all children.

### **7. Child Behavior Management**

- While parents can guide their own child's behavior, it is inappropriate for a parent to guide the behavior of someone else's child. Any concerns about another child's behavior should be brought to the attention of the center director or front office staff privately and respectfully. Further, parents are not permitted to use any form of physical discipline on their own child while at the centers.

By adhering to this Code of Conduct, we create a positive, respectful, and safe environment for all children, parents, and staff. Your cooperation and commitment to these guidelines are essential in fostering a supportive community where every child can thrive.



## Firearms/Weapons

At no time is any person permitted to carry any type of firearm, ammunition, or weapon on center property for any reason, unless you are required to carry as a condition of the individual employment. This is an Indiana State Licensing regulation.

## Film/Photograph/Video Release

On various occasions, children attending the centers may be photographed and/or video taped for purposes of program planning and/or public relations. A parent is able to indicate their permission on the Enrollment forms.

Growing Kids uses audio and video monitoring at the centers for quality assurance, training, and security purposes. To protect the security and privacy of the students and adults at the centers, Growing Kids has adopted the following policies governing the use of audio and video monitoring. To view the policy please visit <https://growingkids.com/wp-content/uploads/2024/02/Growing-Kids-CCTV-Policy.pdf>.

## Field Trips and Transportation

Field trips away from the centers are a part of our activities for school-age children. Growing Kids will not transport any child without the written consent of the parents. To attend any field trip, a permission slip must be signed by the parent in advance, allowing the school to transport the child to the field trip and allowing the child to participate in the activity.

## After-School Care

### Transportation

Growing Kids Learning Centers recognizes the importance of safe and reliable transportation from the elementary school to Growing Kids for school-age children. To accommodate the needs of our families, we offer transportation options.

Many local school districts provide bus services that transport children directly to and from Growing Kids Learning Centers. Please check with your respective school districts to confirm availability and routes. Parents are responsible for setting up transportation with the school district and providing Growing Kids Learning Centers with the bus number and time assigned to their child(ren).

Some Growing Kids Learning Centers offer transportation on Growing Kids' buses to select schools within the district. Growing Kids' buses are driven by trained staff members. Please speak with the specific Growing Kids Learning Centers you are enrolling with to determine if this service is available.

At the time of enrollment, all children enrolled in Growing Kids' after-school programs must have a Before and After school Transportation Form filled out by their parent/guardian to confirm their transportation to and from the Growing Kids center.

## Prohibited Substances

Growing Kids Learning Centers does not allow smoking, vaping, tobacco use, alcohol, or illegal substances on our property.

## Child Abuse and Neglect

At Growing Kids Learning Centers, the safety and well-being of your child(ren) are our top priorities. As part of our commitment to providing a secure and nurturing environment, we have a legal and ethical obligation to report suspected child abuse and neglect.

The Child Protective Services Act requires mandated reporters to report any suspicion of abuse or neglect to the Department of Child Services as soon as they become aware. Growing Kids' staff are mandated reporters and are trained annually on recognizing the signs of child abuse and neglect. We take this very seriously and are dedicated to acting in the best interest of every child.

Any reports made to the Department of Child Services are handled with the utmost confidentiality; our ultimate goal is to protect the child while respecting the privacy of all involved. The Child Protective Services Act does not allow our staff to discuss their suspicions with parents/guardians prior to reporting the matter to the appropriate authorities or to investigate the cause of any suspicious marks, behavior, or condition prior to making a report.

Once a report of suspected child abuse and neglect is made to the Department of Child Services (DCS), it is important to understand that Growing Kids cannot discuss or further investigate the situation with the child, parent, or staff involved in the allegation until DCS completes their investigation. Growing Kids will keep parents informed about the process and provide updates as permitted by DCS. Once DCS has concluded their investigation, we can discuss the situation with the parent.

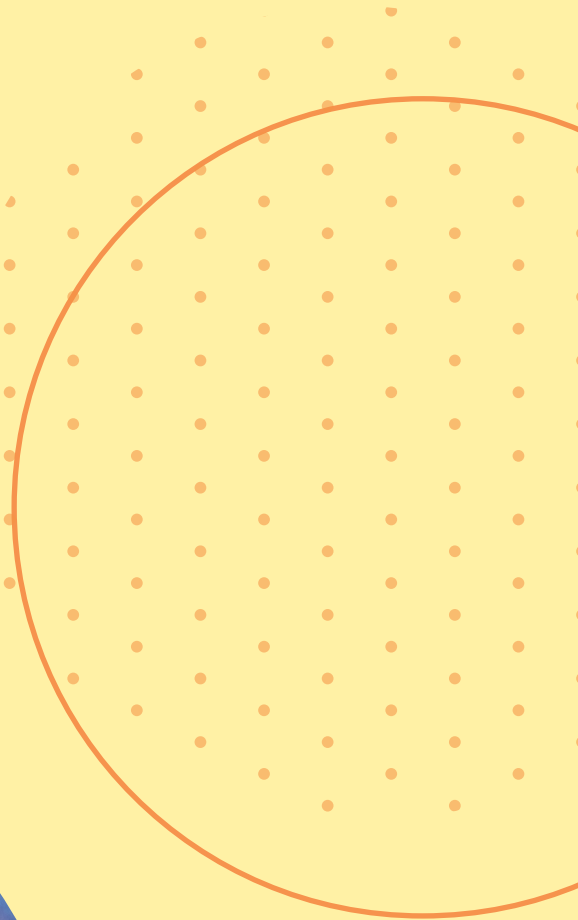
We understand that this is a sensitive topic, but it is crucial for ensuring the safety and well-being of all children.



# SECTION 4

# Enrollment

# and Tuition





# Application and Enrollment Process

Children are enrolled into the centers when there is availability. When there is no open position currently available, or if a parent would like to enroll at a future date, Growing Kids offers a Preferred Waiting List. The Preferred Waiting List is available to all interested families and requires a small deposit to indicate a family's interest in enrolling. When an opening becomes available, we will contact the next family on the Preferred Waiting List.

- Once a child is on the Preferred Waiting List, we maintain the child's proper placement on the list (infant, toddler, etc).
- Siblings of children already enrolled in the center are given priority over new families.
- Once enrolled, your child's continued enrollment is expected through preschool age. Your child's advancement will be planned before new enrollments are accepted. Separate registration is required for the school age camp programs. In these programs, space is limited. Check with the director for details.
- Non-Discrimination – At Growing Kids, we are dedicating to creating a welcoming and inclusive environment for everyone. Growing Kids does not discriminate on the basis of race, color, religion, sex, marital or veteran status, national origin, handicaps, or political beliefs in its enrollment policy. We do not tolerate any form of bias, prejudice, or discrimination.

## Enrollment Forms and Your Child's File

By law and good operating practice, we are required to maintain a file for each enrolled child. Parents must provide us with the following:

- Initial enrollment is contingent upon receipt of the completed enrollment application, signed fee agreement, payment of the application fee and security deposit, immunization records, any other records required by licensing regulations, and signed Parent Handbook receipt.
- If the enrolling child has an IEP, IFSP, 504 Plan, or other Behavior Management Plan, these documents should be provided prior to enrollment to aid the child's transition into the program and so staff can be consistent in their expectations, communication, and interaction with the child. If the enrolling child will receive one-on-one care and/or therapist support in the childcare facility, the parent(s), therapist(s), and childcare team must have a meeting to review the services being provided, discuss rules and procedures for outside therapists entering and working within the building, and set expectations for regular progress review and communication.
- A current physical examination report and immunization record completed by a physician. The form needed is included in the enrollment packet, and additional copies are available at our office.
- Reporting any changes or updates to your child's information is the responsibility of the parent.

## Shared/Joint Custody

In cases where the child or parents of an enrolled child are the subject of a court order (e.g., Custody Order, Restraining Order, or Protection from Abuse Order), Growing Kids must be provided with a Certified Copy of the most recent order and all amendments thereto. Custody Orders will be strictly followed unless the custodial parent(s) requests a more liberal variation of the order in writing and the court order allows for parental discretion or changes. In the case where both parents are afforded shared/joint custody by order of the court, both parents must sign the request for more liberal interpretation of the order. Any Protection from Abuse and/or Restraining Orders will be followed exactly as written for the entire period the order remains in effect. Should parents decide the PFA/RO is no longer needed, they must provide a certified document from the court rescinding the original order.

When the custody of the child is shared between parents, both parents will be afforded access to the child's records, provided access to the center management/communication app, and invited to participate in any and all conferences and center events.

When one parent has custody of the child, the non-custodial parent will not be given access to the child's record, provided access to the center management/communication app, nor be invited to participate in any conferences or center events without specific written permission of the custodial parent, unless otherwise stated in the court order.

In all cases related to court orders, parents who attempt to place the program between the two parents may have their child's enrollment discontinued. Growing Kids is here to provide quality care to the child, not take sides in a parenting or relationship dispute. Growing Kids does not make judgements on parenting practices or capability. Parents are discouraged from calling center staff or administrators as witnesses in court matters.

## Confidentiality

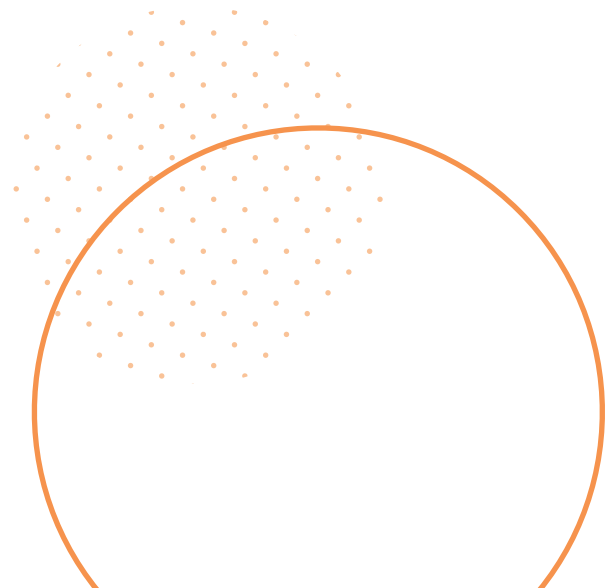
All information pertaining to a child or the child's enrollment is kept in strictest confidence. Except for licensing or regulatory purposes, this information will only be released with written parental approval.

You may observe children at our centers, or your child may tell you things about a child in their class. Growing Kids will not discuss another child's behavior, discipline, or enrollment with you. Our Confidentiality Policy protects every family's and child's right to privacy. Employees of Growing Kids are prohibited from discussing anything about another child with you.

## Cell Phone/Recording Devices

To maintain a child-focused and safe environment, we ask parents to refrain from using their cell phone while inside the building. This ensures that drop-off and pick-up times are dedicated to engaging with your child and communicating with staff members.

Further, Growing Kids has an obligation to protect, respect, and preserve the privacy of all children and families in our program; therefore, parents are not permitted to use any recording devices, including cameras, smartphones, or other electronic devices, to capture audio, video, or images within the childcare center.



# Tuition and Hours of Operation

## Annual Registration Fee

Each child enrolled is charged an annual registration fee during August/September. This fee helps cover the administrative cost of file review and maintenance, child accident insurance, and additional supplies and equipment. Children enrolled after August may be charged a pro-rated registration fee. The registration fee is nonrefundable.

## Tuition and Fees

Growing Kids charges tuition on a weekly basis, with payments due every Monday for the upcoming week. Parents should notify the director in writing to request a change to the child's enrollment schedule at least two days prior to the requested change.

(Example: a child who attends five days per week switching to three days per week.)

- Tuition is due every Monday. Timely payments are essential for continued enrollment. Non-payment of tuition is grounds for dismissal from the program.
- The Tuition Information and AutoPay Registration Form must be signed prior to beginning care and provides information on tuition policies and the AutoPay discount Growing Kids offers.
  - Autopay – The AutoPay Tuition Discount is offered to parents who enroll in the AutoPay program. Enrolled families receive a discount on weekly tuition when their account is paid in full on Monday.
- We accept debit cards, checks, and credit cards for payment.
- Tuition rates will be reviewed annually. Enrolled parents are notified at least 30 days in advance of any tuition changes.

## Subsidized Tuition Programs

Growing Kids accepts childcare subsidies. Parents must complete all required paperwork on time to continue enrollment. Parents receiving subsidies are also required to sign an agreement, agreeing to be personally responsible for the payment of the full tuition fee, in the event they become ineligible to receive childcare subsidies. Parents receiving subsidies are required to provide updated eligibility information in a timely manner and are required to notify the center immediately of any changes/updates to their eligibility or co-pay amount.

## Returned Payment Fees

A return payment fee will be charged when a payment is returned to us for any reason. Returned checks are not re-deposited. The center reserves the right to require secure payment from any parent who has had a returned check (e.g. money order, credit card, debit card).

## Late Pick Up Fees

A late pick up fee will be charged when a child is picked up past their scheduled pick up time. In general, half-day students must be picked up by lunchtime. Full-time students must be picked up by 6:00 p.m. The fees are applied to your account and are due immediately.

- Late Pick Up Fee - \$1 per minute per child
- After a certain number of late pick ups, the parent will be required to meet with the center director to discuss the issue. If late pick ups continue, we reserve the right to end enrollment.

## Children Left After 6:00 p.m.

All children must be picked up by 6:00 p.m. It is the responsibility of the parent to ensure that the child is picked up by the right time. Please remember that only persons listed on the authorized pick-up form can pick up your child. If someone else will be coming, it is necessary to authorize that person. Please see the section above on Adding / Changing Authorized Pick-Up People. If a child is not picked up by 6:00 p.m., Growing Kids staff will start calling the people listed on the child's authorized pick-up list to make arrangements for pick up. If we are unable to reach anyone on that list, we will call Child Protective Services - Abandonment Division and they will pick up your child.

## Absences and Illness

Due to ongoing expenses, parents are responsible for full payment of tuition, even though the child may not attend due to illness or other absence.

Tuition represents your child's enrollment in our program and the spot they occupy in the assigned classroom, not their attendance. There is no tuition credited for absences, vacations, scheduled school holidays, child illness, or for closings due to emergency situations, inclement weather or acts of God.

## Operating Days and Scheduled Holidays

Growing Kids Learning Centers is open Monday through Friday every week of the year.

The scheduled closings are for major national holidays and our Professional Development Days:

- New Year's Day
- Close at 3pm on New Year's Eve
- Memorial Day
- July 4th
- Labor Day
- Thanksgiving
- Christmas Day
- Close at 3pm on Christmas Eve
- 2 Professional Development Days - Spring & Fall

If these holidays fall on a Saturday or Sunday, the centers will be closed on the closest weekday. Tuition during these weeks is not adjusted for scheduled closings.



## Emergency Closings

Every effort is made to provide care during our scheduled hours of operation. In the event of a weather-related or other emergency closing, parents will be notified to pick up their children. Announcements will be made on the Growing Kids Facebook page and through the online parent engagement system. It is important for all parents to download the parent engagement app and ensure emails and notifications are enabled. Due to ongoing expenses, tuition is not refunded for emergency closings.

## Ending Care

In the event that you decide to end your child's care at Growing Kids Learning Centers, we require 2 weeks written notice.

In certain circumstances, the center may decide to discontinue a child's enrollment as we reserve the right to deny admission or to request the withdrawal of any child. If that decision is made, the parent will be provided with the reasons for the center's position. Generally, this decision would be based on the safety and best interests of the child and other children in the class and the overall operation of the center. We will work with the parents to resolve the problem before any decision is made and will try to provide advanced notice but reserve the right to terminate enrollment immediately.

Any past due balances must be paid within 30 days of enrollment ending. Any balances remaining after the 30-day period will be referred to the company's legal counsel for collection.

Reasons for termination of enrollment include, but are not limited to:

1. Non-payment of tuition.
2. Disruptive or dangerous behavior.
3. The center's inability to meet a child's needs.
4. Abuse of children, staff, or property by a parent or child.
5. Violation of Growing Kids' policies and procedures.

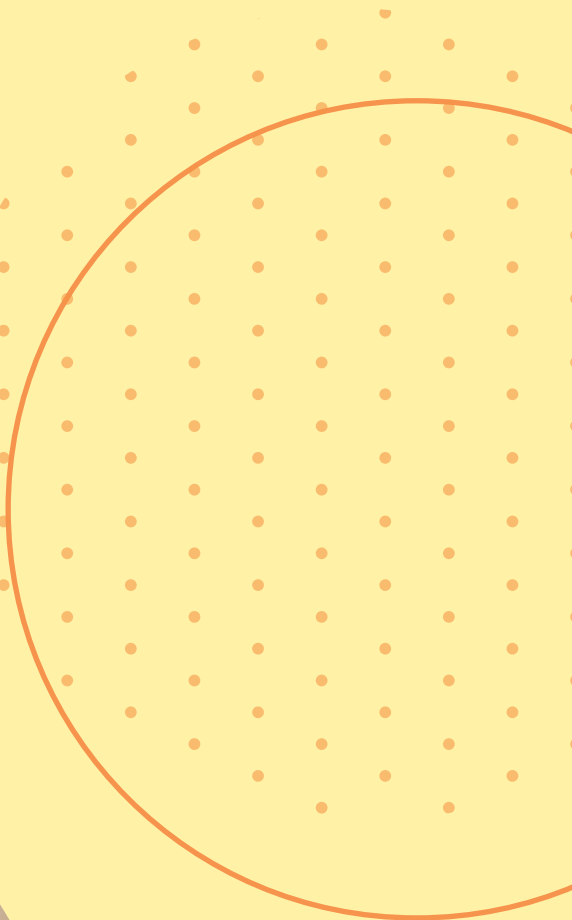
After their last day of enrollment, parents and their child are not allowed to re-enter the center without prior approval from the center director. If a withdrawn child and their parents wish to return to Growing Kids, they must call and request an appointment with the center director. These appointments are granted at the discretion of the center director and are not guaranteed rights for the withdrawn child or parents.



# SECTION 5

# Final

# Thoughts



# Additional Comments and Questions

Our director would be happy to answer any comments or questions you might have about our services. Parents are always welcome to stop by or call. If the director is not available, we have arranged for alternate staff members to act in their place. The Person in Charge list is located on the Parent Board, near the front of school. The director and staff welcome the opportunity to speak with you about your child and the centers.

When a comment or question is not resolved satisfactorily, all parents are encouraged to contact the Chief Operating Officer of Growing Kids.

Mrs. Julie Clarke

[JClarke@growingkids.com](mailto:JClarke@growingkids.com)

Phone: 574-220-6431

**Thank you for choosing Growing Kids Learning Centers.**

We look forward to being of service for many years to come.



Protect | Educate | Inspire®  
[growingkids.com](http://growingkids.com)  
574-970-7500

