

# Parent Handbook

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## WELCOME!

We at Horizons Childcare and Learning Center would like to extend a warm heart-felt welcome to you and your family for choosing us to assist with your child's early education and care.

We provide a "home away from home" learning based environment with a developmentally age-appropriate curriculum. We are dedicated to the values of respect and dignity for every child and their parent(s). It is our goal to foster an environment that will help promote growing experiences by building confidence, positive self-concept, and socialization skills, while also focusing on knowledge and independence.

We value tradition and diversity while treasuring the love of children. It is our desire and responsibility to help create a playful and learning environment designed for early and continuous childhood success.

Our teachers are trained and qualified professionals dedicated to helping your child achieve quality education and realize their greatest potential. We understand the trust you place within us when you enroll your child in our program, and strive to go beyond to exceed your expectations when it comes to quality care and education for your child.

Horizons Childcare and Learning Center is committed to instilling a life-long love for learning, while providing a nurturing atmosphere that helps promote self-image and self-esteem in all children.

### Our Philosophy

Horizons Childcare and Learning Center believes that parents want the best for their children and the peace of mind that their childcare provider is doing just that. We believe that all children are unique individuals and deserve unique attention to ensure they realize their greatest potential for success. We have dedicated our efforts to obtaining the highest quality resources, training, and

amenities to provide exceptional childcare in an enriched, safe, secure, and loving environment. Our programs are geared towards building character, self-confidence, self-esteem, and school readiness while giving your child a strong foundation to experience life challenges. Rest assured, Horizons Childcare and Learning Center is where your child's success matters!

### Our Mission

Horizons Childcare and Learning Center program provides the highest quality childcare and education that promotes and enhances each child's development with the assurance of our parent's peace of mind.

Horizons Childcare and Learning Center Vision:

- Maintain the highest standards.
- Nurturing Children with Loving Care
- Providing a Safe and Secure Environment
- Providing a Clean and Well Organized Facility
- Offering Quality Educational Programs Focusing on:

Social/Emotional Development    Physical Development  
Cognitive Development            Language Development            Whole Child Development

Enforce basic core values such as:

- Respect for Self and Others
- Pride in Self and Community
- Develop Teachers/Professional Staff Members.
- Partnership with and Provide Services to the Community.

## SECURITY

### Checking In And Out

We believe strongly in the importance of security for you, your child and our staff. Horizons Childcare and Learning Center has procedures in place for proper pick-up and drop-off of the children in our care.

### Checking In

How Does This Work?

Every time you arrive at the center, your child must be checked in on the Touch Screen keypad in the lunchroom. The Director will assign a personal identification (access code) to the parents and others who are authorized to drop-off or pick-up your child.

### Checking Out

Every time you pick up your child from the center, you must check him/her out on the touch screen in the lunch room. If an authorized person is picking up your child, he/she must show proper identification, such as a valid driver's license, before we will release your child. That person must then check your child out on the touch screen in the lunchroom. It is Horizons Childcare and Learning Centers policy that no one under 16 years of age (except one who is a child's parent) is permitted to pick up a child. In special circumstances, it is important that you indicate on your enrollment form who the custodial parent is and who may pick up your child. If there should be a situation where someone who has not been indicated on the authorized person list is required to pick up the child, a parent must contact the center PRIOR TO the child being picked up. The Center may contact the parent(s) after the initial call to ensure that the request is legitimate.

### Visitors

All visitors must state the purpose of visit by signing the visitor log in the office. To ensure the security of the children, teachers and the Director require picture identification from all unfamiliar visitors. If a visitor is listed as an authorized person to pick up a child, the visitor must still show picture identification if the Director and/or Teachers do not know he/she.

### Emergencies

Emergency procedures are posted in the Center. If an emergency occurs, it is crucial that children respond in a safe and orderly fashion. Therefore, your child will participate in regular drills and practices so he/she will know what to do in the case of an actual emergency. Should an emergency affect the Center, we will notify you as soon as possible. As a safety measure, the Director keeps an updated file of names, addresses and phone numbers of the people you have authorized to pick up your child in case of an emergency. It is important for you to notify the Director in writing as soon as possible of any changes or additions to your contact information, i.e., the emergency contact's name and phone number, to ensure that we can communicate any emergency, illness or injury in a timely manner.

### Open Door Policy

Parents are welcome to visit the Center at any time; however, we request that the parents be mindful of activities in progress, as interruptions can be very disruptive during some activities. During these times, you may observe the children from the video monitor located in the office.

### Accountability of Staff

As you walk through Horizons Childcare and Learning Center, you will notice many classroom windows throughout area. These observation windows, in addition to our video monitoring system, increase the accountability of our staff members, protecting both the children and our staff.

### Hours of Operation

Horizons Childcare and Learning Center is open:  
Monday through Friday from 6:30 a.m. until 6:30 p.m.

If you are unable to reach the Center by closing, please make arrangements for someone to pick up your child (See Release Policy).

Note: It is very important that you pick your child up by closing time; otherwise, a late fee of \$1.00/minute will be charged and payable at the time you pick your child up. No exceptions/no excuses for paying late fee!

### Holidays

We observe the following holidays and will be closed for care:

- Eid Al Fitr
- Eid Al Adha
- New Years Day
- Martin Luther King Jr. Day
- Memorial Day
- Independence Day (4th of July)
- Labor Day
- Thanksgiving Day
- Day after Thanksgiving
- Christmas Eve
- Christmas Day

\*There will be no reduction of tuition fees for these holidays



## ENROLLMENT

### Orientation Tour

We require all children to tour Horizons Childcare and Learning Center at least once prior to enrollment. This visit gives you and your child a chance to meet teachers, future friends, and to see the new surroundings.

### Admission Requirements

As an equal opportunity, childcare center Horizons Childcare and Learning Center considers applications for enrollment, regardless of race, religion, color, sex, national origin, disability or any other basis prohibited by law. Enrollment packets are provided to interested parents/guardians upon completion of an "Orientation Tour". All admission requirements must be met at least two business days prior to the child's first day of attendance.

### Admission requirements are as follows:

- An Enrollment Form must be completed for each child that will attend Horizons
- A Physician's Health Statement and a current Immunization Record is required for all children not attending public school.
- A signed copy of the Authorization for Emergency Medical Care form must be on file for each child.
- A signed copy of the Parent Agreement Contract (the last page of this Handbook) must be on file.
- A completed copy of Infant Feeding Instructions is required for all children less than one-year-old.
- Prior to the first day of enrollment your child must have created an account via our Cake Childcare system.

Each family is asked to meet with the Director or Assistant Director before the first day of attendance to complete additional paperwork. Feel free to ask any questions or discuss any concerns you may have with the Director or Assistant Director. We welcome your questions and input!

Please be sure to update all emergency information as needed, including address, home and work telephone numbers, and individuals authorized to pick up your child.

### CakeChildcare.com

This online reporting system will be the main mean of communication between teacher and parents. There you will find how your child did during the day, any new milestones hit and if your child is in need of diapers, wipes or a change of clothes.

### Child Placement

The primary considerations for classroom placement are chronological age and developmental level of the child. Movement to another class will be based on the appropriateness of the move for your child and the needs of the Center to accommodate enrollment shifts. You will be notified in advance of any permanent change in placement. In most cases, a transition period is given to allow the child time to adjust to the new setting and teachers.

### Disenrollment

A notice is required to allow The Center adequate time to fill the vacancy. We ask that you give a two-week notice. These last two weeks will need to be paid-in-full whether your child is in attendance or absent.

### Withdrawal

The Center reserves the right to terminate a child's enrollment with a written notice for the following reasons:

- Non-cooperation of a child or parent by being rude or abusive to any child or staff.
- Delinquency in payment of tuition or other fees
- Recurring tardiness in picking up children
- Inability of child or parent to adjust to Horizons Childcare and Learning Center.
- A Potential health or safety risk to the child, the other children, or staff are not being met.
- If the best interests of the child, the other children or the staffs of the Center are not being served.

Typically, the Center will provide a 1-week written notice of enrollment termination; however, the Center reserves the right to immediately terminate enrollment if circumstances warrant such a termination.

## Grievances

A parent with a grievance concerning a staff member should first try to deal directly with the individual staff member then if unresolved, the parent should take the grievance to the Center director. If the grievance concerns a Center policy, the parent should approach the Center Director all together.

## ATTENDANCE AT THE CENTER

### Arrival and Departure

It is important that your child's day begins on a positive note. When you arrive at the Center, please accompany your child to his/her classroom. Make sure to let the teacher know your child has arrived. Many children enjoy it when their parents spend a few moments in the classroom at the beginning of the day, and we encourage parents to do this when they are able to do so. In some instances, long good-byes can make the child upset. If you see this is the case, we recommend the parent/guardian leave promptly after saying goodbye.

This ensures that we properly prepare for the day's activities. No child will be allowed after 11:00am unless prior arrangements have been made and approved by the director. Lunch time is at 11:30am followed by nap. We asked that all students are here before that so they may enjoy the day with their friends before its time for a nap.

At the time of pick-up, please feel free to come into the classroom and talk with our teachers about your child's day. If you have any concerns please email us at [horizonslearningcenter@gmail.com](mailto:horizonslearningcenter@gmail.com) to schedule an appointment with the teacher.

### The First Day

Arriving Together: The first day at Horizons Childcare and Learning Center can be an emotional one for everyone involved; however, there are some positive steps you can take to help make the day a great experience for your child.

Talk with your child about what is to come – new friends, fun activities and a nice teacher.

Make sure your child brings a special security item (Blanket, soft stuff animal etc., for those who need one) to the Center. While this item will need to be stored in your child's cubby during the day, your child's teacher will be happy to show your child where the item will be kept for safe keeping

Note: Please label your child's item.

Since children will be arriving and departing at various times, please enter quietly and try not to disturb any activity in progress.

In order to insure the safety of all children during arrivals and departures, please observe the following rules:

Children must be taken to, and picked up from their classroom. Do not drop children off on the playground with a caregiver other than their teacher.

- Never leave a child in the car.
- Never leave your car motor running.
- Open all doors cautiously to assure they do not swing into a family entering the building.
- Hold your child's hand when coming into, and/or leaving The Center.
- 

### Adjusting

The first day can be a time of high anxiety for families too. Feel free to call the Center throughout the day to see how your child is doing.

New situations affect every child differently. Sometimes a child does wonderfully on the first day because everything is new and exciting, but gets anxious on the second day when he or she recognizes this is going to be a set routine.

Most children need two or three weeks to fully adjust to a new environment. The best way to support your child is to show enthusiasm, encouragement and patience. If you need reassurance or suggestions for helping your child feel more at ease, speak with your child's teacher or the Director. Remember, The Center's primary goal is to work with you to provide a safe, nurturing fun environment for your child in which to learn and develop.

### Combining Age Levels

As the day narrows towards close, we will let teachers combine classes in order to clean their classrooms, get ready for the upcoming activities, etc. Age groups of close proximity will be combined and safe activities for all ages will be used.

### Release Policy

Your child will not be released to anyone that is not authorized on the child's enrollment form. Anyone not recognized will be asked to show proper ID, such as a driver's license, and will be confirmed as an authorized person. (ID may be required several times after the individual's first time picking up the child.) There will be some "getting used-to" at the beginning, but as the teacher recognize an individual, ID's may not be required unless we have a substitute teacher.

**\*\*Note:** Parents/guardians will be given a code for each person authorized on the enrollment form to pick up a child.

The parent must inform the Center in advance of anyone other than themselves picking up their child, even if he or she is already listed on the child's enrollment form under Release Information. If, for some reason the parent is unable to pick up the child or wishes to send someone not listed on the enrollment form, written notice must be on file in the office before the child will be released. This notice can be left in the office at the time of drop off or faxed to the Center. Faxes must include a copy of the parent's driver's license or ID, the name of the person picking up the child (as it appears on his/her ID), and the applicable date(s). **AUTHORIZATION FOR PERSONS NOT LISTED ON THE ENROLLMENT FORM WILL NOT BE ACCEPTED BY PHONE!**

### Courtesy Calls

Please call us and leave a message if your child will not be attending on a certain day. This helps us to plan our day/means. It is especially important for school-age children who will not require transportation to and/from public school.

### Drop-In Policy

Drop-in care is provided, based on availability of space, for families not needing full-time child care. All regular enrollment requirements must be met. Parents must call in advance each time the child is to attend, in order to be sure space is available in the appropriate classroom. If the classroom is filled with full-time students, we will not be able to provide care for the child on that day. Our fee is \$10.00 per hour per child.

### Clothing

Dress your child in our uniform. Khaki or Navy blue bottoms and a white or navy blue polo with comfortable closed-toe shoes. Since our classrooms extend to the outdoors, please dress your child appropriately for the weather. (No flip flops please!) Days at The Center can sometimes be messy so bring a change of clothes for your child, including pants, shirt, socks and underwear.

Mark all clothing with permanent ink or name labels. Please do not send heirlooms or meaningful blankets, pillows, clothes, etc. Although we encourage children to take care of their clothing, The Center cannot be responsible for lost, torn, damaged, stained or soiled clothing or other personal items. Please do not send your child in clothes that are expensive or valuable to you in any way.

### Personal Belongings

Because toys and belongings brought from home often cause tension and jealousy, we ask that you not allow your child to bring items from home to Horizons Childcare and Learning Center unless specifically requested by the teacher for a special activity. However, we do allow each child to bring one small, soft toy or special blanket to be kept in his/her cubby for nap time. Please make sure that any such item is labeled with your child's name and that the teacher is aware you have brought it. Horizons Childcare and Learning Center is not responsible for items brought from home.

### Jewelry

Because jewelry may be easily damaged and sometimes may be hazardous during active play, we encourage parents to have their children leave all jewelry at home. Horizons Childcare and Learning Center is not responsible for jewelry that your child is wearing or brings from home.

## Health and Safety

Immunization and Health records are to be kept up to date at all times!

### Illness

Your child's health is of the utmost importance. Please do not bring your child to the Center if he or she is sick. We understand that this may cause you some difficulty, but if everyone cooperates, your child will be sick less often.

If your child becomes sick during the day, we will remove him/her from the regular room and place him/her in the care of office personnel. We will notify you immediately to come and pick up your child if he or she shows signs of illness. We suggest that each family find backup care for sick days.

Children may **not** remain at the Center when any of the following symptoms are present:

#### Vomiting.

- Diarrhea: Three occurrences within the course of two hours.
- Runny nose with green or yellow discharge or associated with fever, or cough with mucous secretion. Any discharge other than clear may be a sign of infection.
- Oral temperature of 100 degrees or temperature of 99 degrees under the arm: Children may return to the Center after being fever free for 24 hours without Tylenol or other such products.
- Conjunctivitis or Pink Eyes: Children with red, itchy, draining or crusty eyes may have conjunctivitis. Children may return to Horizons Childcare and Learning Center after 24 hours of successful antibiotic therapy, a doctor's release, or with written notice from the doctor stating that the child is not contagious.
- Rashes or skin conditions such as poison oak, impetigo, or contagious cold sores: Any unusual rashes must be examined by a doctor. Children may return to the center after any sores are crusted over and dried or a doctor's release is presented.
- Chicken Pox: Children with chicken pox may exhibit the symptoms of low fever, rash, blisters, scabs, and malaise. Children may return to the Center after any sores are crusted over and dried.
- Lice/Hair Infestation: Children may return to the Center after receiving a specified shampoo treatment and all signs of eggs or nits are gone.
- Stiff neck with fever and headache or glandular swelling: Children may return to the Center with written notice from the doctor stating that the child is able to participate in Center activities.
- Severe coughing, sneezing or breathing difficulties: A doctor's note may be required for the child to return to the Center.
- Other symptoms: Any symptoms the Director or Health Department determines to be inappropriate for the child to attend Horizons Childcare and Learning Center will be upheld.

Please be advised that a doctor's release stating the type of illness and that your child is no

longer contagious may be required upon returning to the Center. This policy will be left to the Director's discretion.

Also, in accordance with Florida Minimum Standards for Child Care Centers, a child should not be in the care of the Center if he or she cannot participate comfortably in Center activities, including outdoor play. If you feel your child is not well enough to go outside, he or she should be kept at home.

We ask you to help us track and control the spread of infections by notifying the center if your child becomes infected with a contagious disease or infection of any type. In certain cases, a notice stating symptoms, treatment, and requirements for returning to the Center will be given to parents when a child in the group has become ill. The name of the sick child will NOT be given.

Non-contagious chronic health problems will be managed according to a physician's written instructions.

### Medications

We know that many children need to continue medication even after they are well enough to return to school; however, in order for us to give children medicine at the Center, the following guidelines must be followed:

- Prescribed medicine must be in the original container labeled by a pharmacist with the child's name, name of medication, expiration date, dosage, instructions for administration, and date of prescription.
- Non-prescription medicine will not be given to any child.
- Parents must complete and sign a medical form and leave the medicine with office personnel.
- Horizons Childcare and Learning Center will not administer medication that is expired.
- All unclaimed medication will be disposed of after 5 consecutive days of non-use.

**\*\*ALL MEDICATION SHOULD BE GIVEN TO OFFICE PERSONNEL. Please do not take any medication into the classroom. \*\***

**\*A small refrigerator will be in office for Meds\***

### Allergies

If your child has allergy issues, please speak to your child's teacher and the Director so we can take the right precautions. The Director can provide a copy of our policy regarding caring for children who have allergic reactions.

If your child requires certain medication (i.e. EpiPen, Benadryl, etc.) the Director and Assistant Director needs to be provided with said medication and a form must be filled out about the

procedure of each product.

### Immunizations

In accordance to Minimum Standards, a completed immunization record must be on file at the Center prior to the first day of attendance for any child not attending a public school or pre-k program.

### Injuries/Incidents

At Horizons childcare and learning center, we make every effort to create a safe environment for children. However, accidents do occasionally happen with small children. If a child is injured while in our care and the injury requires medical attention, you will be contacted to pick up your child. If, for some reason we cannot reach you, the Center will seek the appropriate medical attention.

It is crucially important that all emergency numbers and medical information be kept current at all times. If you need to make changes to the information listed on the enrollment form, please contact the Director/Office.

Safety at Horizons Childcare and Learning Center is our number one priority. However, as children begin exploring their developing abilities, accidents sometimes happen. We take precautions to prevent childhood accidents. Our vigilant approach to safeguarding children starts with ensuring that our building, playground, vehicles and equipment meet all applicable safety guidelines and requirements. Our staff is trained to be watchful and take precautions to prevent accidents and injuries. Children receive instruction on “safe practice” at our Center, and they are guided away from hazardous behavior. We approach safety as a matter of continuous improvement.

Although safeguards are in place, accidents and injuries are still possible. Should your child have an accident or suffer a minor injury while at our Center, we will administer basic first aid and you will be notified. If your child needs non-emergency medical care, we will call you promptly so you can arrange for him or her to be seen by a doctor. In the event of an emergency, we will call 911 and notify you.

Note: If your child is injured at the Center and requires medical attention, you will be asked to sign a form acknowledging that the matter was reported to you in a timely fashion. This is in accordance with state licensing regulations.

### Incident Reports/Ouch Notes

If an incident or minor injury occurs, first aid is administered and a report is filled out and signed by the parent or guardian and kept in the child’s file. In some situations, the parents will be notified via telephone, per our discretion, unless otherwise specified by the parents. A copy of the report is given to the parent.



### Severe Weather and Other Unsafe Conditions

Horizons Childcare and Learning Center makes every attempt to keep its doors open, even in extreme weather conditions. We feel responsible to parents who have to be at work no matter what the conditions. Please be patient on days of inclement weather. We follow the action of Orlando Orange county School Districts when weather or other conditions make it unsafe for the children to be in our care. If the public schools must close, we will do the same. Parents will be called and asked to make arrangements for their children to be picked up as soon as possible.

We conduct monthly drills with the children to be sure that all of us are prepared in case of a fire. Severe Weather drills are conducted at least every six months. We encourage families to learn our routines and reinforce them at home. Should you enter the Center while a drill is in progress, we invite you to join in with the procedures that we are following at the time of the event.

### Inclement Weather

The Outdoor Play Experience is an important part of your child's day at Horizons Childcare and Learning Center. It is our policy for all children to participate in outdoor activities on a daily basis, weather permitting. With this in mind, we ask that you dress your children accordingly. In the event of inclement weather or extreme temperatures, outdoor play experiences will be limited or cancelled based on state regulations. The teachers or associates will apply sunscreen on your child, which you provide and as you direct. Your written authorization and instructions for applying the sunscreen are required. Remember to label your child's sunscreen with his/her first and last name.

## HEALTH AND NUTRITION

### Hand Washing

Frequent and proper hand washing prevents the spread of many germs. Both staff and children are instructed in proper hand washing procedures. Parents, teachers and children must always wash their hands before and after eating, after using the toilet or diapering and after coming in contact with bodily fluids such as mucus, blood or vomit. Parents and staff are to wash hands before and after joining children's activities.

### Nutrition

"Nourishment" takes on a new meaning at Horizons Childcare and Learning Center. Our nutritious healthy breakfast, lunches and snacks satisfy your child's rapidly growing body. At our Center, we believe in the importance of nourishment. Your child receives a minimum of three healthy nutritious meals and/or snacks each day. Menus include foods children love, which meet their daily nutrition needs as well as our licensing requirements.

Horizons Childcare and Learning Center's first and foremost priority is to ensure that we provide a healthy and safe environment for the children in our care. Therefore, our policy does not allow

food of any kind to be brought into the Center except in the following instances:

- **Baby Food and/or Formula:** You are to provide baby food and/or formula if you are not participating in the Child Care Food Program. Please see the Center's Director for complete details.
- **Food Allergies, Religious or Special Dietary Needs:** All arrangements for special dietary needs must be discussed with your Center Director prior to enrollment to determine if your child's needs can be accommodated. In some cases, a physician's note may be required.
- **Birthday Treats:** Special treats brought in to share with your child's class and/or other children must be commercially prepared and packaged. Please check with your child's teacher to see if there are any children with food allergies that may need to be accommodated. In such instances, the teacher in your child's classroom is responsible for inspecting the food. They will look at the expiration date, serving directions, etc., to ensure that the food we serve your child is healthy and safe. If food is brought in for any of the reasons above, it must be clearly labeled with your child's first and last name and the current date.

Horizons Childcare and Learning Center participates in the USDA Child and Adult Care Program. In accordance with Federal law and U.S. Department of Agriculture policy, the Center is prohibited from discriminating on the basis of race, color, national origin, sex, age or disability.

### Meals

We provide nutritionally balanced snacks and meals. A menu is posted and given to each parent at the time of enrollment. Mealtimes are relaxed fun times, rich with conversation. Second servings are available to the children in accordance with the proper serving size for the child's age.

Given the different preferences of parents and doctors in relation to the food intake of infants/toddlers, you are asked to provide all food for infants under one-year of age and toddlers until they are eating the regular food on the menu without special accommodations.

Also, if your child has any dietary or religious restrictions concerning food, please let the teacher and Center know, and these will be honored to the best of our ability.

All of the meals each child is receiving follows the Child Care Food Program Meal Pattern Guidelines which specify the appropriate serving sizes for each age group. Further information on the CCFP Meal Pattern is disclosed at the end of the handbook.

### SAFETY

For the safety of the children and staff, daily and monthly inspections are made of the facility and equipment. Broken or damaged equipment is promptly repaired or removed.

Fire drills and severe weather drills are routinely conducted and annual inspections help to

maintain a safe environment.

#### Emergency Evacuations and Relocations

Evacuation plans are posted in each room of the building. Should the children need to leave the building in the event of an emergency, they will be moved to the back side of the playground until the building has been inspected and is safe for their return. As recommended by the City of Orlando Emergency Management department, we will relocate to the Leader Preparatory School in the event of an emergency necessitating evacuation of the premises.

Parents will be contacted and advised regarding emergency pick-up procedure.

#### Licensing Agency

Horizons Childcare and Learning Center is licensed by the Florida Department of Children and Family and thus is required to follow the minimum standards set forth by the state of Florida and is subject to their inspection. The Center exceeds those requirements in many areas such as child staff ratios, required teacher qualifications, curriculum and health and safety standards. Current inspection reports are posted in the office area for anyone's review. A copy of Florida's Minimum Standard Rules is always available to anyone for review.

#### Emergency Procedures

The following incidents will require Horizons Childcare and Learning Center to contact the authorities (911):

- If a child is lost and/or missing.
- If a child is bleeding from an injury.
- If a child has died or has become unconscious.
- If there is suspect of abuse or neglect Horizons Childcare and Learning Center will contact The Child Abuse Hotline at 1(800) 96-ABUSE (800-962-2873).

#### It is the right of the licensing agency to perform their duties as follows:

Interview children and/or staff and to audit child and staff records without prior notice or consent.

Observe the physical condition of the child(ren) including conditions which could indicate abuse, neglect or inappropriate placement and, if determined necessary, provide protective custody and/or have a licensed medical professional physically examine the child(ren).

## Our Responsibility in Reporting Suspected Child Abuse and Neglect

As caring and concerned childcare providers, we take our responsibilities seriously. Abuse and neglect, whether physical or emotional, can happen in all types of families, from all walks of life and in varying degrees. When abuse occurs, both children and parent/guardians are the victims and need support, understanding and help.

Horizons Childcare and Learning Center employees have been trained to recognize the signs and symptoms of abuse and neglect. Furthermore, the law requires us to report all suspected cases of abuse and neglect.

## Financial Information

### Application Fee/Registration

A non-refundable application fee of \$75.00 per child when the application is accepted.

Note: This fee will not be applied towards tuition payments.

Tuition is due and payable on Monday, of each week if you enroll in a weekly payment plan. If you are enrolled in a monthly payment plan your tuition is due in full on the 1<sup>st</sup> or 2<sup>nd</sup> of the month. If your child will not attend Horizons Childcare and Learning Center for any reason – illness, vacation or holiday. We require that the entire week's tuition be paid in full prior to the absence; this will guarantee his or her space upon return. Weekly statements are available through the Director, and tax statements are available for you at the end of January.

### Tuition

Tuition is based on full-time enrollment and guarantees your child a space at the Center.

### Sibling Discount

A tuition discount of 10% is available to families with more than one child currently enrolled at Horizons Childcare and Learning Center.

### Special Activities

Activities and programs, such as summer activities, field trips, etc., may be offered at an additional charge. Fees are payable by the day of the event or the first day of the program. Most school age field trips are included in summer tuition charges.

### Holidays

Regular tuition rates apply during weeks containing holidays for which the Center is closed.

Horizons Childcare and Learning Center accepts payment for tuition and fees in the form of a personal check or cash. For safety reasons, the Center does not accept currency payments for tuition or any other fees. Payments receipts can be furnished upon request.

Our Tuition schedule has been established to provide your child with the best possible care at the most reasonable cost to you. Tuition fees for the week are billed on Monday and are late after Monday at 6:30. A late fee of \$25 a day is due after that time. A parent/guardian may pay for more than one week at a time, but all such payments must be made in advance to avoid late fees.

### Late Pick-Up Fee

Your child may become very upset when you are late picking him/her up. Additionally, licensing allows the Center to operate only within certain hours, so please make every effort to pick up your child on time. If tardiness is unavoidable, notify the Center immediately and arrange for your child to be picked up by another adult.

Note: If you arrive after 6:30 p.m., a charge of \$1 per minute past closing per child will be added to your account. If you are more than one hour late and the Center has been unable to contact an authorized pick-up person listed on your child's enrollment forms, the law requires that we contact Social Services, who will pick up your child for safekeeping. Your commitment to picking up your child on time will help your child feel comfortable at Horizons Childcare and Learning Center, as well as allow us to focus on the wellbeing of the child, and the other children in our care.

### Delinquent Accounts/Late Payment

A late fee of \$25 will occur, per day, on any account that is not paid-in-full by noon on Wednesday. Only one late fee per year may be excused with the Director's permission.

Horizons Childcare and Learning Center will not provide service to families whose account balance is equal to or greater than two times the weekly tuition charges. Should your account become delinquent, we will not allow the child to attend until payment arrangements have been made.

### Returned Checks

In the event that your check is returned for insufficient funds, we will make two electronic or draft attempts to collect from your account, which will result in additional fees being charged.

\$25.00/Returned Checks

Note: After 3 return checks, you will be required to make your payment in a money order or cash.

### Absence

If your child is absent for any length of time, or only attends sporadically during the week, you are still responsible for payment to reserve your child's space at the center.

### Refunds

Refunds will only be made in the form of credit to your account to be used for future services. Note: In case of an over-payment, a refund will be given unless a balance is due.

## PROGRAM INFORMATION FOR CHILDREN

### Diapering and Toilet Training

Horizons Childcare and Learning Center requires you to supply diapers and wipes for your child. The staff will notify you when your supplies are running low. Children's diapers are changed as needed and are checked routinely.

The Center will work in conjunction with you and your child on toilet training. Toilet training will not be attempted with children under the age of 18 months. Children are never punished or forced when toilet training. Diapering procedure guidelines are used when cleaning up a toileting accident. You are asked to supply extra changes of clothing while your child is in the toilet training process.

At Horizons Childcare and Learning Center we view toilet training as a skill your child will gradually master with the proper support. We have developed a Toilet Training Guide. This set of resources was designed to provide support during the toilet training process by creating a plan that is consistent, positive and manageable both at home and at the Center. We look forward to working together when the time is right, so that your child can master this important phase in his/her development.

As your child moves to Horizons Childcare and Learning Center next educational milestone, the Early Preschool Program, it is our belief that he/she should enter this new and exciting learning experience already toilet trained. This is important so that both your child and the teacher can focus their energies on developing important cognitive skills through uninterrupted interaction with the curriculum and learning environment.

Horizons Childcare and Learning Center will transition successfully toilet trained children into the Early Preschool classroom. If an exception must be made, the Two-Year-Old Program classroom tuition will be charged until the child is successfully toilet trained. We feel that this policy will ensure that all Early Preschool children receive the program quality they deserve.

### Curriculum

In each of the programs at Horizons Childcare and Learning Center: infant, toddler, pre-school and school-age, we provide activities that meet each child's emotional, social, cognitive and physical needs. Developmentally appropriate and play-based learning experiences include a substantial amount of time outside. Activities conducted outdoors offer children exposure to new experiences and opportunities of exploration. Additionally, it promotes a healthy, active lifestyle.

Note: Curriculum calendars are provided (and posted) in each classroom. This calendar lists curriculum activities as well as special days or events such as holidays or field trips.

### VPK

Our VPK program runs from 8:30am- 11:30am 5 days a week. Our VPK wrap program (also known as Extended day) provides our students with a chance to have more one on one time with the teacher and be included in the Arabic and Quran class we offer from 4:00pm-5:00pm Monday through Thursday. This comes at a cost of \$100 a week per child.

### First Day of Attendance

The following items should be labeled with your child's name and placed in his/her cubby by the first day of attendance:

#### INFANTS AND TODDLERS (0-3 YRS OLD):

- Two complete changes of clothes clearly marked with your child's name
- Sweater or jacket with head covering, depending on the season
- At least one week's supply of disposable diapers and diaper wipes
- Baby food and/or formula sufficient for at least one day (infant only)
- Bottles and pacifiers as needed clearly marked with your child's name
- Pictures of family and friends

#### PRE-SCHOOLER (3-5 YRS OLD):

- One complete change of clothes(Uniform) clearly marked with your child's name
- Sweater or jacket with head covering, depending on the season
- Sunscreen and insect repellent for outdoor play

You are required to provide all diapers, wipes, creams and medicines for your child if they are needed.

## DISCIPLINE

We take a preventative approach to discipline that teaches children positive behaviors rather than punishing them for misbehaving. Our goal is to provide children with the opportunity and motivation to make choices, to function independently, and to learn social skills through gentle, encouraging guidance, respect the needs of others, adapt to routines and simple rules, and become responsible group members.

### Positive Guidance

As a matter of policy, physical punishment is never permitted on the Center's premises by anyone. Behavioral expectations at Horizons Childcare and Learning Center are consistent with the age and development needs of your child. Redirecting children to more appropriate activities, acknowledging and affirming positive behaviors, teaching by example and helping children understand logical consequences to their behavior usually resolve most situations. Horizons Childcare and Learning Center reserves the right to terminate a child's enrollment for persistent, unacceptable behavior that threatens the safety and/or quality of the program.

If your child is experiencing a change in his or her home environment that may affect behavior, please let your child's teacher or the Center Director know. Communication is important to your child's progress. Horizons Childcare and Learning Center will keep you informed of any issues we feel should be addressed. We will work with you to address the situation; however, should it be necessary, the Center reserves the right to ask families to make temporary or permanent alternative arrangements for their child.

### Discipline Policy

We will use positive methods of discipline that encourage self-control, self-direction, positive self-esteem and cooperation. Each member of our staff is required to complete training that deals with the issue of classroom discipline.

Discipline at Horizons Childcare and Learning Center is individualized, yet consistent for each child. The child's level of understanding is considered and discipline efforts will be directed toward teaching the child acceptable behavior and self-control. Our staff is instructed to follow these guidelines:

- We will use praise and encouragement of good behavior instead of focusing only on unacceptable behavior.
- We will remind children of behavior expectations daily by using clear, positive statements.
- We will monitor and analyze the situations and redirect play and learning activities when necessary.



- We will guide the child toward more appropriate behavior using positive statements.
- There will be as few rules as possible. Rules that are developed will focus on health/safety, consideration of others and their feelings, and care of materials and equipment.
- Limits and rules will reflect the children's stage of development and will be consistently regulated.
- We will handle disagreements between children fairly. We will avoid taking sides or the word of one child, especially about situations we did not witness.
- We will encourage children to handle non-dangerous situations by themselves.
- We will step in and take control of the situation where other children or adults are being hurt, when children are hurting themselves, and when property is being destroyed.
- We will remember it is the misbehavior we dislike and not the child.
- In some instances, a brief, supervised separation from the distressing situation may be used to allow the child to refocus before rejoining the group. The amount of time which a child may be separated from the group is limited to no more than one minute per year of the child's age.

There will be no harsh, cruel, or unusual treatment of any child. The following types of discipline and guidance are prohibited:

- Corporal punishment or threats of corporal punishment.
- Punishment associated with food, naps, toilet training, or outside play; pinching, shaking or biting a child.
- Hitting a child with a hand or instrument.
- Putting anything in or on the child's mouth.
- Humiliating, ridiculing, rejecting, or yelling at a child.
- Subjecting a child to harsh, abusive, or profane language.
- Placing a child in a locked or dark room, bathroom, or closet with the door closed.
- Requiring a child to remain silent or inactive for inappropriately long periods of time for the child's age.

The following discipline procedures will be followed accordingly:

Discipline Procedures:

- A verbal warning will be given to the child about their behavior.

- A written warning is completed over the child's behavior for monitoring.
- A meeting with the family and director will be held about the child's behavior.
- A 2-day suspension will be required if the child's behavior continues.
- A definite termination from Horizons Childcare and Learning Center will be completed.

No child may be physically restrained in any way unless required to protect the immediate safety of the child and/or others. The Director or other office personnel may become involved if the child is not responding to the teacher's efforts. At this point, the parents may be contacted and suspension or expulsion may occur.

If all the above have failed; a meeting will be set up with the parents to determine a positive Individualized Discipline Plan.

All staff members are informed that failure to follow these guidelines may result in termination of employment.

### Biting

While there are many different causes of this behavior, biting most often is the result of a child's frustration or the result of oral pain due to teething. We understand that biting is developmentally appropriate for some ages; however, it must be stopped for the safety of the other children.

Every effort is made by our Horizons Childcare and Learning Center Staff to minimize the number of biting occurrences in our infant and toddler classrooms. Our procedure for handling biting in the classroom is as follows:

- The child who bit will be removed from the situation.
- The bitten child will be comforted.
- The bitten areas will be cleaned.
- Reports will be filled out for the child who may have bitten someone or who has been bitten.
- The parents of the bitten child will be notified.
- The biting child's parents will be notified.
- The classroom environment will be assessed
- The biting child will be closely supervised.
- The identity of the biting child will be kept confidential.

### Dismissal due to Behavioral Issues

If implementation of the Individualized Discipline Plan is not successful in correcting the behavioral issue, or if a child exhibits behavior that threatens the safety of the child or others, we

may no longer be able to care for that child.

A child may be temporarily or permanently dis-enrolled from the Center, at the discretion of the Director. NO REFUND WILL BE GIVEN.

## COMMUNICATION

### Parent/Teacher Conferences

It is our hope that parents and staff will become partners in the education of your children. To do this, we will need your help from time-to-time. Since you know your child better than we do, we ask that you share any information that may help us to understand your child better and to meet his/her particular needs. We will also want to share with you the progress your child is making. This partnership requires two-way communication. We will try to keep you informed in the following ways: Open House, parent meetings, informal chats at arrival or departure time, conferences, phone calls or notes, and articles/magazines on parenting, child development and other relevant information.

We also want you to have an opportunity to share information with us. We strongly urge you to use any or all of these methods: informal chats with staff, conferences, phone calls, and parent meetings.

### Parent Code of Conduct

Horizons Childcare and Learning Center has developed the Parent Code-of-Conduct to ensure that you, your child, our staff and all that enter our Center enjoy a safe, welcoming and respectful environment. Actions that demonstrate respect for others are expected in our Center. Behavior that is inappropriate, illegal, threatening or disrespectful in nature or language that is abusive or instigative is not acceptable. We reserve the right to refuse service without warning to anyone who violates the Parent Code-of-Conduct, including refusing access to the Center.

### Bulletin Boards/Parent Notices

Every class has a parent board which has lesson plans, class notes, menus, classroom schedule, ratio requirements, and evacuation routes on it. Please ask the teacher to show you the parent board and look at it frequently.

### Resources for Parents

We try to support our Horizons Childcare and Learning Center families in every way we can. We are happy to answer any questions on topics related to our scope of practice (i.e., discipline, toilet training, etc.); many times we are able to suggest additional resources on the topic. If you are interested in reading materials, please ask! From time-to-time, we place interesting articles at the

front office for parents and staff; feel free to take one if you wish.

### Volunteering at Horizons Childcare and Learning Center

Everyone has some skill or knowledge that can be useful to a child care program, and any program for children can be enriched by a team approach where everyone contributes what they can. Maybe you can help us with a field trip, share your culture, or read a story. Maybe you can repair toys or tell the children about your job. Would you like to put pictures in a photo album or work on a scrapbook? Can you sew? Do you play a musical instrument? How about carpentry skills? There are many ways you can help at Horizons Childcare and Learning Center. We hope you will find some time to be involved. You will meet other parents, have a good time, and help us provide the best possible care for your child. Certain procedures (including background checks) must be followed for individuals volunteering on a regular basis. See office personnel for details.

### Record Updates

Please fill out a "Change of information" form immediately if there is a change in any of the original enrollment information, including release information and emergency contacts. We will do a general file update every year to make sure all of the information in our file is correct.

### Daily Reports

Each infant and toddler class has a daily report that is given through the Web Portal. Reports for older children may be completed if requested.

## GENERAL INFORMATION

### Naptime

All children in care five or more consecutive hours will have a supervised sleep or rest period.

### Horizons Childcare and Learning Center Staff

We take great pride in the competency of our staff. Each member of our team strives to maintain the highest integrity and professionalism, while making every child and family feel loved. Our teachers come to us with high recommendations, and we make our final selection based on education and experience. We seek employees who value working as a team with parents and colleagues.

Every member of our Horizons Childcare and Learning Center Staff is required to complete pre-

service training before being placed in a classroom. All classroom staff must maintain at least twenty clock hours of training per year in topics such as child development, communication, and curriculum activities. In addition to this, all staff must be First Aid and CPR certified and must complete annual training in SIDS, Shaken Baby and Infant Brain Development. A background check is completed for each employee prior to the first day of employment.

### Pictures

Upon enrolling your child at Horizons Childcare and Learning Center, you give us permission to take pictures of your child. We take many pictures throughout the year of our Children; these pictures may be posted at the Center or used during our special programs. Parents will be notified and permission obtained before we use a child's picture on our web page.

### Birthdays

Birthdays are special days for children. If you wish to celebrate your child's birthday at Horizons Childcare and Learning Center, please make early arrangements with your child's teacher. Please bring store bought cupcakes (Publix). Approve any toys or gifts that will be given out for prizes/treats through the Director or assistants.

### Americans with Disabilities Act

Horizons Childcare and Learning Center's programs are available to people of all abilities. Please let us know if there is any reasonable accommodation that would make our program more easily accessible to your family.

### Office Phones

Please do not ask to use office phones unless it is an emergency. Also, please do not enter the office unless a member of management is present, as much of the information kept in the office is confidential. We want to protect everyone's privacy.

### No Smoking

Horizons Childcare and Learning Center is a non-smoking facility. According to Minimum Standards, smoking may NOT be permitted on the premises when children are in care.

Horizons Childcare and Learning Center is dedicated to the success and happiness of the children to which we render care. Our success is built on the devotion of our staff and directors who work together with you and your child in an open, nurturing, and learning-based environment where we respect the dignity of every child and family.

**We are glad you are here at Horizons Childcare and Learning Center!**