

Parent Handbook



Families Forward Child Development Center

Our Mission Statement

“Empowering children, regardless of income or background, to be compassionate and capable life-long learners by providing quality early education and care.”

Our Philosophy Statement

Families Forward Child Development Center is committed to providing a safe, nurturing environment for all the families that entrust their children to us. Families are integral to the success of their child’s development. Open communication and collaboration with families is practiced daily to ensure that we are providing the best care for each child. This relationship helps us provide respectful experiences for each child and family. Learning is designed to be developmentally appropriate through a research-based curriculum that focuses on play. We believe children learn best through play and the authentic interactions and discoveries that come when children direct their own learning. The child’s role as the learner is to grow and change every day under the guidance of their teachers. The Families Forward teachers are care providers; they are knowledgeable in the principles of child development which enables them to look at each child as an individual. We strive to mold and build positive character so that each child will become a successful citizen.

Updated October 2023

Dear Family,

We are pleased that you have decided to enroll your child at Families Forward Child Development Center. The staff is committed to making this a successful and rewarding experience for you and your child.

The following Parent Handbook outlines all the important areas of our program. Please read it carefully and bring any questions you might have to the attention of the center Director. The policies and procedures identified in this book were written to ensure that we have the tools we need to offer a quality childcare environment for your child as well as sustain a financially secure business operation.

Please keep this book handy so you can refer to it whenever you have a question. You will receive any changes, deletions, and additions to this handbook in writing.

Thanks Again!

Families Forward Child Development Center Staff

Table of Contents

<u>Operational Policies</u>	5
Who Can Enroll at Families Forward?	5
Equity Statement	5
Teacher/Child Ratios	5
Center Hours of Operation and Holidays	5
Weather Conditions	6
Discipline Policy	6
Preventing and Reporting Child Abuse	6
Adult Expectation Agreement	7
Confidentiality	7
Open Door Policy	7
Parking	7
Smoking	8
<u>Enrollment Policies</u>	8
Arrival and Departure Procedures	8
Late Pick-up	9
Custodial/Non-Custodial Pick-up policy	10
Withdrawal	10
Items Your Child Will Need at the Center	10
Outdoor Policy/Clothing	11
Potty Training Policy	11
<u>Tuition Policies</u>	11
Tuition Rates	11
Late Payments/Delinquent Tuition	12
Returned Check Fee	12
Absentee Policy	12
<u>Communication and Participation</u>	12
How Will We Communicate About My Child?	12

Health Practices

Physicals and Immunizations	13
Health and Development Screenings	13
Medication	13
Illness and Exclusion Policy	14
Safety Practices	16
Accident and Incident Reports	16
Emergency Situations	16

Nutrition Practices

Religious Food Preferences	18
Food Allergies	18
Foods From Home	18

Curriculum

Health and Safety	19
Nutrition	19
Two-Year-Old Room	19
Preschool	19
Field Trips	19

USDA Nondiscrimination Statement	22
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Operational Policies

Who Can Enroll at Families Forward Center?

We accept children between the ages of 2 and 5 years of age at our center. The parents of these children embrace our developmental approach to learning.

Children with special needs will be considered on an individual basis and the Center will accept children as long as we are assured that we can fully meet the child's needs and the needs of other children in the group with reasonable accommodations. In all cases, the child must be able to participate and substantially benefit from our program without risk to themselves or to other children.

If the Center has no immediate vacancies, a waiting list is maintained for future enrollment vacancies. Vacancies are filled on a first come, first serve basis with consideration given for group composition.

Equality Statement

It is the policy of the Families Forward Child Development Center not to discriminate based on race, color, national origin, sex, disability, religion, creed, age (for employment), marital status (for programs), sexual orientation, gender identity and socioeconomic status (for programs) in its educational programs and its employment practices. There is a grievance procedure for processing complaints of discrimination. If you have questions or a grievance related to this policy, please contact the center director.

Teacher/Child Ratios

Our facility follows the listed teacher to child ratios.

- Explorers (24-36 months of age) 1:6
- Little Learners (30 – 36; 36-40 months of age) 1:8
- Jr. Preschool (40-48 months) 1:8
- Pre-K (4 by September 15) 1:10

Our facility is currently licensed to hold 68 children, however, to maintain a high quality of education, we have a maximum enrollment of 62.

Center Hours of Operation and Holidays

The Center is open from 6:30am-5:30pm., five days a week, twelve months a year except for the following holidays each year.

New Year's Day
Martin Luther King, Jr. Day
Memorial Day
Juneteenth
Independence Day

Thanksgiving Day
Day after Thanksgiving
Christmas Eve
Christmas Day
New Year's Eve

Labor Day

Should traditional holidays occur during a weekend or be rescheduled for a long weekend, we will observe the holiday in accordance with the National Holiday Bill.

The center will also be closed one additional day each year in the fall for staff training and development. Also, the center will be closed on another additional day in March for a day of deep cleaning and staff training. These days will be announced to parents at least 2 months in advance to give you time to make alternate arrangements for your child(ren) on that day.

Weather Conditions

Weather closings will follow Des Moines Public Schools. If DMPS closes for the day, Families Forward will also be closed for the day. Early outs will be a management decision on case-by-case basis. If DMPS has a late start, Families Forward will not. We will open as usual at 6:30.

Discipline and Guidance Policy

The goal of Families Forward Child Development Center is to provide a positive program for children and their families. We will not engage in corporal punishment, emotional or physical abuse, or humiliation. We will not use discipline methods that involve isolation, the use of food as punishment or reward, or the denial of basic needs. At times, children may have difficulties getting along with others and expressing themselves. When this happens, they let us know in a variety of ways and sometimes they act out their frustration with undesirable behavior. Following is an outline of how we provide guidance.

To provide the best possible experiences for your child, we will communicate with you in a variety of ways. These include telephone contact during available hours and greeting you when picking up and dropping off your child. We will get to know you and your child. In this way, we can work together to build on the child's strengths. Parents are encouraged to ask questions about their child's behavior and the guidance being used in the classroom. Communication between staff and families is vital to forming a working partnership that benefits everyone.

If a child engages in unacceptable behavior, Families Forward staff will follow these steps:

1. Staff will redirect the child to an appropriate activity and/or the child will be given suggestions for positive alternatives. If the behavior involves another child, then the teacher will help the two children to discuss the situation and mediate a solution with the children.
2. If this strategy isn't effective, the child will then be removed from the activity and the staff and child will have a period of "thinking time" or a "calm down time". This time will allow for the children and staff to discuss the situation at hand. They should come to a solution that will help the child to make a better decision next time. The child will then be redirected back to a more appropriate activity.
3. If the behavior continues on a regular basis without improvement, a meeting with the parent, teacher and possibly director will need to occur within 24 hours of notification of the request for a meeting. The meeting will detail the concerning behavior, request input from the parent, and outline future steps. If this meeting cannot occur within 24 hours of notification, then the child cannot attend Families Forward until the meeting has taken place.

4. Staff will begin tracking the behavior on a tracking form. The director, On-Site Supervisor and/or ECQUIP team consultants will begin observations to help the teachers formulate a behavior plan which could include classroom modifications, social stories, shadowing of the child during identified difficult points of the day, etc.
5. After an agreed upon timeframe, the parent, teacher, and director will have a meeting to discuss the progress or lack of progress. In the event of little progress, a plan will be formulated which could include a DMPS referral, pediatrician visit, a plan to find a more suitable childcare arrangement, therapy, or other solutions.

Preventing and Reporting Child Abuse

The protection and safety of children is an important goal of Families Forward Child Development Center. All staff members receive training in prevention and reporting. CENTER STAFF ARE MANDATORY REPORTERS AND ARE REQUIRED BY LAW TO REPORT TO THE DEPARTMENT OF HUMAN SERVICES ANY SUSPECTED CASES OF CHILD ABUSE. Suspected cases may include unexplained (or vague history for) bruises, burns, or fractures, frequent hunger, poor hygiene, inappropriate clothing for weather conditions; unmet physical, emotional or medical needs; unusual interest in or knowledge of sexual behavior; or history of abuse/neglect reported by the child. Reports are always confidential and made with the child's safety in mind. Please contact the center staff if you have questions or concerns.

As required by law, all staff working with young children will be screened for any previous child abuse charges.

Adult Expectation Agreement

One of the most important ways that staff can reinforce positive behavior is to demonstrate positive behavior for children. Children learn how to behave and interact with others by watching how significant adults in their lives express themselves and perform daily tasks.

Because of this, it is important that adults provide a good example and are good role models for children. Both parents and staff share this important responsibility. Therefore, a certain level of conduct is expected of adults in the classrooms, adjacent buildings, hallways, and parking lots located close to the center.

These expectations include no profanity, threatening, shouting, or adult discussions of highly personal nature. If a family member needs to discuss a personal matter with the staff, please call the center before the children arrive or after the children leave. Discussing personal issues in front of the children can be highly disruptive and unsettling.

Confidentiality

Maintaining confidentiality is essential to the quality of services provided for families. Information that families share with Center personnel and volunteers is used to provide the best experience for families and children.

We are committed to respecting and safeguarding all information about the families we work with. To ensure this, each Center employee/volunteer signs a statement of confidentiality. In addition, children's records are always kept in locked files.

Children's experiences, relationships, behaviors, development, challenges, and successes are an important part of their Center life. Because parents, volunteers, and consultants are members of the team they are expected to maintain confidentiality. This means that as a volunteer what you can see and hear about children and family's needs to be held in strict confidence. Also, any information you see or hear about staff must be kept confidential.

When everyone associated with Center maintains confidentiality then the integrity and reputation of families, staff, and the program is maintained.

Open Door Policy

Parents are welcome at the Center at any time. Prior notice to management or teachers is not necessary, however, be aware that there are certain times of the day when children are napping and visitors in the room can disturb their rest.

Parking

Handicap parking spaces are only to be used when a sticker is visible. The city does patrol the lots and may issue tickets.

Parking is available to the parent/guardians in the parking lot that is adjacent to the center. Please be extremely careful when driving through the Center's parking areas. There are small children walking through the lot. **DO NOT** leave your car running while you are inside the building and **PLEASE DO NOT** leave **ANY** children in car while you are inside the building.

Smoking

Families Forward Child Development Center is a smoke free environment. We ask all adults to be positive role models for our children. There is no smoking allowed on the Center's grounds, this includes the parking lot. **Please extinguish all smoking material prior to leaving your automobile.**

Enrollment Policies

Families Forward Child Development Center strives to provide families with a thorough preview of our agency and its requirements for enrollment.

The following components are required prior to enrollment.

- A tour of our facility (preferably with your child present)
- Allow time to observe and have your child interact within the potential classroom.
- A meeting with the Center Director to discuss your needs and concerns and to answer any questions.

- Determine tuition rate and eligibility for funding.

These additional components are required prior to leaving your child here for the day.

- 2 initial Key fobs per family (\$5.00 deposit for additional key fobs) to enter the building.
- A current physical exam (dated within the last 12 months)
- Immunization card completed and signed by your child's physician.
- Completed enrollment packet (includes emergency telephone numbers, pick-up information, and parental agreement forms.)
- If state subsidized, a copy of "Notice of Decision" worker's name and telephone number.
- IF applicable:
 - Any additional medical paperwork, asthma/allergy action plans, food substitution forms, etc.....
 - Any legal paperwork stating guardianship, custody, etc....

Scheduling

In your Enrollment Contract, you will be asked to list what time you will be dropping off your child and what time you will be picking them up each day. This is to help with scheduling of the teachers. If you bring your child earlier than your appointed time, you may not be allowed to drop off until your designated time to prevent teachers from being out of ratio based on State Licensing Standards. If there is a change in your scheduling, please contact the director at least 24 hours in advance. You will also need to pick up your child by the designated time on your Enrollment Contract.

Arrival and Departure Procedures

- Your child must be signed in upon arrival and signed out upon departure. The ProCare terminal located at the entrance is used for this purpose.
- **Children must be escorted by their parent/guardian into the Center and their classroom. Parents will assist their child with removing their coat and placing it in their cubby. Make sure that a teacher knows that your child has arrived. All children are required to arrive at the center no later than 9:00am. Arrival by 9:00am ensures that your child is receiving the full benefit of their classroom program.**
- You will be asked to fill out an Emergency/Pick-up Authorization Form naming people that YOU will allow to pick up your child if you cannot, due to an emergency.
- Any person authorized by you to pick up your child must be 18 years of age or older.
- NO ONE will be allowed to pick up your child from the Center at any time unless the person is on the emergency release form and presents a photo I.D.
- If you send an individual to pick up your child who is not listed on the Authorization Form, you must inform your child's teacher or the director. The new person's name will need to be placed on the form, and they will need to present a photo I.D.
- The Center staff will require photo identification when someone besides the parent/guardian picks up the child.

Your child must arrive at Families Forward by 9:00am each day. We do understand that occasional conflicts may occur (medical appointments, transportation difficulties, etc.). If this does occur, **it is the parent/guardian's responsibility to call the Center by 9:00am** to inform the staff of the child's late arrival. However, excessive call-ins will be addressed to parents. If the parent/guardian does

not call in and arrives at the Families Forward after 9:00 am, they may not be allowed to leave their child.

Late Pick-up

Families Forward Child Development Center closes each day at 5:30pm. Each family signed an enrollment contract agreeing to this time.

If a late pick up occurs, then a late fee will be issued.

5:31 - 5:35 A fee of \$1 per minute is charged.

5:36 - 5:40 A fee of \$5 per minute is charged.

5:41 - pick up A fee of \$10 per minute is charged.

The late fee must be paid before the child can return to Families Forward for care.

If a child remains at Families Forward for thirty (30) minutes after closing time and no one can be contacted by phone to pick-up the child, then the staff will call Child Protective Services.

If a family is late picking up their child twice in six months' time, then their new pick-up time becomes 5:15 and the late fees will begin at 5:15 for a period of three months.

If during those three months they pick-up late, then the 5:15 pickup period will continue for six months.

If they still have a late pick-up after all these strategies have been implemented, then the 5:15pm pickup time will become permanent, and all late fees will begin at 5:15pm.

Custodial/Non-Custodial Pick-Up Policy

Families Forward Child Development Center respects the rights of both custodial and non-custodial parents. Both parents will be allowed to pick up and designate pick-up persons for their child (ren) on their assigned days unless the following are on file at the Center.

1. Court order contact limitation papers.
2. Guardianship papers.

If a parent who is NOT allowed to pick-up a child comes to the Center (and the above paperwork is on file) the parent will be asked to leave and told that the police will be called if they do not leave. If the parent tries to leave with the child, the staff will not attempt to physically restrain the parent or the child or place themselves in danger to keep the child at the Center. The Center will notify the police immediately.

Withdrawal

If you find you no longer need our childcare services, we ask that you provide a **TWO-WEEK WRITTEN NOTICE**. In the event the notice is not provided, you will be financially responsible for the two weeks.

Items Your Child Will Need at the Center

There are a few things you should bring with your child to the center. Every child at the Center needs a complete change of clothing. **BE SURE TO LABEL EACH ARTICLE OF CLOTHING THAT IS BROUGHT TO THE CENTER WITH PERMANENT MARKER.**

If your child has an accident or needs a change of clothing that has not been provided, you will be contacted.

Parents of children needing diapers are asked to bring a daily supply of disposable diapers and wipes. If you choose to bring in a larger supply, we do have storage in the classroom. We change children often, so plan about 6 diapers per day.

Outdoor Policy/Clothing

Weather permitting, all children play outside each day. Fresh air is good for children and helps reduce the spread of illness. If children are too ill to play outdoors, children need to remain at home. For extenuating medical needs, a doctor's note is required for a child not to participate in outdoor play (to stay indoors). Two staff members must be always on the playground. If there is not an extra adult available your child will be placed in another classroom while his or her class goes outside.

Outdoor activities will be canceled when the wind chill is 0 degrees or below or the heat index is 98 degrees or greater. Please send your child to the Center in comfortable, sturdy shoes, socks, and clothing that may get dirty. Outerwear (hats, mittens, scarves, boots, etc.) should be sent daily as appropriate for weather.

Please remove strings from your child's Hoodies/Jackets, this provides staff continuous support in preventing strangulation.

Please put children's names in all clothing brought into Families Forward CDC.

Potty Training Policy

When your child begins to show signs of being "ready" for potty training we will ask you to attend a conference to discuss how you would like to proceed. This is an important milestone in a child's growth and development, and we want to approach it as we do all milestones, relaxed and prepared.

When both the teachers and parents agree to start this training, you will be given additional information on the center's potty-training procedures.

Tuition Policies

Families Forward Child Development Center is a community service non-profit agency. Private pay families are expected to pay their weekly tuition payment in full on the first day their child attends the Center. Funded families are expected to pay all co-pays in full on the first day their child attends the

center. No credit will be given to private pay or DHS funded families for any Holidays/Staff Development days the Center is closed. Credits will be given for weather-related closings.

Please make sure you sign the Payment Contract found in your enrollment packet. A new Payment Contract needs to be signed whenever there is a change in your funding source, co-payment, and payment schedule.

Families Forward Child Development Center only accepts full time children. If your child is consistently absent, they may lose their spot in our program. If your child is not going to be here for an extended length of time, please let the Director know.

Tuition Rates

Families Forward Child Development Center offers full-time childcare. Part-time care is provided on a case-by-case basis.

2-Year-olds (Explorers): \$224 per week

3 Year Olds (Little Learners): \$200 per week

3-4 Year Olds (Superheroes): \$200 per week

4-5 Year Olds (Wise Owls): \$192 per week

-Per DMPS Partnership the Families Forward Preschool/UPK room receives 10 free hours per week

Tuition is due on Monday for that week of care. Payments are made prior to any care provided, not after.

Children may attend up to 10 hours a day. If you exceed 10 hours, you will be charged for the additional hours.

All children in our Universal Pre-Kindergarten classroom attend the 10 hours of UPK curriculum for free. The tuition rates above are intended for the wrap-around hours of care and any hours not included in the UPK hours of school.

Late Payments/Delinquent Tuitions

An account is considered delinquent if it is not paid by Wednesday of any given week. The director will work with each family to get the account balanced.

Returned Check Fee

If a parent pays tuition with a check and that check is returned to the Center as NSF, the parent will be charged a return check fee of \$20.00. The fee plus the amount of the check must be paid to the Center in a money order before the child can return to the Center. If this happens twice the parents will be required to make all tuition payments with a money order.

Absentee Policy

After attending the Center for three (3) months each family may take up to ten days at a 50% reduction (half off / half price) of tuition. These days can be used for illness and for vacation. If your child is going to be absent for the day due to illness you need to notify the Center prior to 9:00am and

inform the director that you want to use absentee credit to receive credit. You must notify the Center, in writing, about your vacation plans at least two weeks in advance to receive credit. Absentee credit will not be applied if notification is not given.

Families that have Child Care Assistance are only allowed **six** absent days per month. All the holidays listed on page 5 of this handbook and staff development days count as absences. If we are closed for weather related issues, this does not count against you.

Communication and Participation

How Will We Communicate About My Child?

Parents of toddlers and two-year old children can expect written communication daily. Parents are expected to pick up this daily communication form from their child's cubby. This communication includes important information about your child's physical bodily functions as well as his or her disposition.

The teachers in the preschool and pre-kindergarten programs will give written feedback on a regular basis. Conferences will be held twice a year with parents. Talking with your child each day about experiences and feelings will bridge your child's day between the Center and home.

Each classroom has a Parent Information Bulletin Board. Teachers prepare lesson plans that are posted on this board. These plans are usually based around a weekly theme. Books, activities, songs related to the theme will be outlined on this lesson plan. Take a minute each week to review this form and we look forward to your contributing any information on themes for which you hold a special interest. Also listed on the Parent Information Bulletin Board are a class schedule, a teacher schedule, and articles of interest.

Upon enrollment, we will make any accommodations for needed translation or other communication assistance as needed.

Annual Surveys

Parents are invited each year to complete a survey of their experience and their child's experience in our program. The data and feedback are used to improve conditions and programming to better serve our families.

Health Practices

Families Forward Child Development Center strives to offer families and children comprehensive quality childcare services. This goal often requires us to exceed the minimum rules and regulations set forth by the Iowa Department of Human Services.

Physicals and Immunizations

State regulations require that children at Families Forward have an annual physical exam and that their immunizations are up to date for the child's age. We will notify you a month or two prior to the expiration date for your child's physical. It is your responsibility to get the updated physical and returned to the center. Under NO circumstances the child will be allowed to attend the Center without a current physical or immunization record.

Cleaning and Sanitation

Twice weekly a cleaning service comes to clean Families Forward's classrooms and shared spaces. Floors and bathrooms are cleaned and sanitized. Garbage is taken out.

In the Wise Owl room, a Monthly Cleaning and Sanitizing Frequency Table is used to ensure cleanliness. When each item on the table is completed, then it is initialed and dated as complete. When the monthly table is complete then it is placed in the Classroom Monitoring Binder.

Standard Precautions (Universal Precautions)

Procedures for standard precautions are used and include the following: a. Surfaces that may contain potentially infectious body fluids must be disposable or made of a material that can be sanitized. B. Staff use barriers and techniques that minimize contact with mucous membranes or of openings in skin with potentially infectious body fluids and reduce the spread of infectious disease. C. When spills of body fluids occur, staff clean them up immediately with detergent followed by water rinsing. D. After cleaning, staff sanitize nonporous surfaces by using the procedure for sanitizing designated changing surfaces described in the Cleaning and Sanitation Frequency Table. e. Staff clean fugs and carpeting by blotting, spot cleaning with a detergent-disinfectant, and shampooing or steam cleaning. f. Staff dispose of contaminated materials and diapers in a plastic bag with a secure tie that is placed in a closed container.

All staff are certified with Universal Precautions to protect against the spread of potentially infectious body fluids.

Health and Development Screenings

During the year, your child will participate in various screenings provided by various agencies. These screenings include vision, hearing, speech, developmental, mental, and dental. Mental health professionals will be observing each classroom and working with center staff to ensure that the children are part of an environment conducive to learning and growing. As concerns are identified, parents/guardians receive a referral letter discussing results and recommendations if more testing or treatment is needed.

- The program's written assessment plan includes the multiple purposes and uses of assessment, including a. arranging for developmental screening and referral for diagnostic assessment when indicated, b. identifying children's interests and needs, c. describing the developmental progress and learning of children, d. improving curriculum and adapting teaching practices and the environment, e. planning program improvement, and f. communicating with families.
- Teachers assess the progress of each child using a variety of tools. Teachers use screening tools to identify a student's interests as well as their needs. Teaching Strategies Gold is used

to monitor children's progress, and the information gathered assists with planning instruction. Student portfolios are also created to show progress during home visits, conferences and as needed throughout the school year.

- Vision screenings are performed by Lion's Club and sent to the University of Iowa for examination.
- Hearing screenings are performed by a Child Care Nurse Consultant from Every Step.
- Dental Screenings are performed by a dental hygienist from Smile Squad/ Dental Connections.
- Speech, Fine Motor and Gross Motor development screenings are performed by therapists from Children's Therapy Services.
- All other development screenings (Ages and Stages Questionnaire (ASQ) and GOLD) are performed by your child's classroom teacher.
- If a mental health or behavior screening is necessary, first an EQUIP consultant will assist the teacher and director with classroom modifications and then a referral may be made to Des Moines Public Schools or other private therapy.

All screenings are made financially possible through our partnerships with United Way and Early Childhood Iowa

Medication

Whenever possible we ask for you to arrange for medications to be given at home. Ask your child's physician to adjust the dosage so that you can administer the medications prior to attending the center and upon arrival home.

If home administration is not possible the following guidelines must be followed:

- The Center must have written doctor's orders with administering instructions.
- The Center must have medication in the original container with a pharmacy label. This must be left at the center during the duration of time/days the medication is to be given. Most pharmacies will dispense medications in two containers, one for home and one for school, if requested.
- The Center must have written parent authorization on the Medication Administration form requesting and authorizing staff to give medication as prescribed.
- If the medication is ongoing, the parent must sign a new form monthly allowing for continuous dispensing of the medication.
- **"Over the Counter" medications are not permitted unless authorized by a physician. Tylenol or Motrin will not be given if the child is running a fever and please do not give your child Tylenol or Motrin prior to coming to Families Forward.**

Staff specifically trained in Medication Administration Skills Competency will give the medication to your child. Staff will record when the medication was given and the dosage. Parents must keep staff up to date on any medication changes throughout the year.

Illness and Exclusion Policy

Keeping children well is hard work. To help keep all children as healthy as possible we will adhere to the following illness and exclusion criteria (see chart on the next page).

All illness and exclusion criteria are from the Iowa Department of Public Health (IDPH) and Healthy Child Care Iowa’s document Common Child Care Illnesses and Exclusion Criteria which was last updated in 2022.

Exclusion Criteria:

- **Illness prevents the child from participating comfortably in activities.**
- **A need for care that is greater than the staff can provide without compromising the health and safety of other children.**
- **An acute change in behavior: lethargy, lack of responsiveness, irritability, persistent crying, difficult breathing, or a quickly spreading rash.**

If a child becomes ill at school, the parent/guardian will be called to pick up the child *within an hour*. Before an unexpected illness occurs, it is important for parents/guardians to have a plan in place to pick up or have the child picked up, and alternative childcare arrangements made, if needed. All persons that may pick up a sick child must be listed on the Emergency Contact and Authorization form, or the parent can inform Families Forward who will be picking up the sick child.

<u>SYMPTOMS/ILLNESSES</u>	<u>MAY RETURN...</u>
Vomiting	Must be symptom free for 24 hours before returning and resolution of exclusion criteria.
Diarrhea/Loose Stools <i>(described as two or more stools in 24 hours, cannot be contained in a diaper, or blood in the stool)</i>	When diarrhea stops and resolution of exclusion criteria. If there is blood in the stool, then a doctor’s note is required before a child can return.
COVID-19	On day 11 from symptom onset and 24 hours with no fever and improved symptoms OR 11 days after a positive test (if no symptoms). IDPH recommends that children can come back after day 5 if no fever and the child can wear a mask correctly and consistently from day 6-10. However, most children under the age of 5 cannot wear a mask consistently or correctly, we will not allow children back before day 11.
Fever <i>(described as a temperature that is above 101 degrees by any method)</i>	Must be fever free without medication for 24 hours before returning and resolution of exclusion criteria.
Chicken Pox/Shingles	When all blisters are crusted with no oozing (usually 6 days) and resolution of exclusion criteria.
Impetigo	May return after child has been seen by the doctor, after 24 hours on antibiotic, and blisters are covered and resolution of exclusion criteria.

<i>(described as a highly contagious skin condition that appears as red sores on the face, hands and feet)</i>	
Skin rash with a behavior change	Must be symptom free with a doctor's clearance and resolution of exclusion criteria.
Fifth Disease <i>(described as a common illness characterized by a distinctive facial rash)</i>	Children do not need to miss childcare unless they meet exclusion criteria.
Tuberculosis <i>(described as a serious bacterial disease that mainly affects the lungs)</i>	Must have written doctor's clearance to return
Head Lice or Nits	Treatment of an active lice infestation may be delayed until the end of the day. Children do not need to miss childcare due to head lice. A brochure from the IDPH outlining a 14-day treatment plan will be shared with the child's family. Proof of treatment is required to return.
Scabies <i>(described as a contagious, intensely itchy skin condition caused by a tiny, burrowing mite)</i>	May return with written doctor's clearance. The area impacted must be covered with clothing or bandages.
Measles, Mumps or Rubella	Child must be excluded from childcare and can only return with a written doctor's clearance
Hepatitis A <i>(described as a form of viral hepatitis transmitted in food, causing fever and jaundice)</i>	Child must be out of school for 1 week after onset of illness or jaundice, under treatment, and approved by a physician for return to the classroom with written doctor's clearance.
Hand Foot and Mouth Disease <i>(described as a common virus causing sores in the mouth and a rash on the hands and feet)</i>	Children do not need to miss childcare unless they are excessively drooling with mouth sores, or they meet the exclusion criteria. To return to childcare all drooling and exclusion criteria must be resolved.
Staph Infection/MRSA <i>(MRSA is a Staph infection that is resistant to antibiotics and difficult to treat)</i>	Children do not need to miss childcare unless they meet exclusion criteria. Wounds must be covered, and gloves worn during bandage changes. Do not share towels or clothing and use good hand hygiene.
Pink Eye/ Conjunctivitis <i>(described as infection of the membrane of the eyelid and eyeball)</i>	Child does not need to be excluded unless a doctor recommends exclusion or if they meet exclusion criteria
Strep throat <i>(described as a highly contagious bacterial infection of the throat)</i>	Child can return with a written doctor's clearance and after 24 hours of antibiotic. Exclusion criteria must be resolved.
Influenza <i>(described as a highly contagious viral infection of the respiratory passages)</i>	Child can return when the child is fever free for 24 hours (without medication) and resolution of all exclusion criteria.
Molluscum Contagiosum <i>(described as a viral skin infection that results in round, firm, painless bumps)</i>	Child does not need to be excluded unless they meet exclusion criteria. Do not share towels or clothing and use good hand hygiene.

Ear Infection/ Otitis Media <i>(described as an infection of the middle ear)</i>	Child does not need to be excluded unless they meet exclusion criteria and then can return when the exclusion criteria is resolved.
Pertussis/ Whooping Cough <i>(described as a highly contagious respiratory tract infection marked by a severe hacking cough)</i>	Child may return after 5 days of antibiotics and resolution of exclusion criteria.
Ringworm <i>(described as a contagious, itchy skin infection that occurs in small circular patches)</i>	Treatment of ringworm infection can be delayed to the end of the day unless the child meets exclusion criteria. Child can return after treatment has begun and with a doctor's written clearance. Cover lesions if possible. Do not share clothing, bedding, or personal items.
Any Reportable Disease	Must be under doctor's care and have written doctor's clearance.

Safety Practices

Accident and Incident Reports

If a child experiences an unusual occurrence or is injured during the Center hours, a written Incident Report is completed. Parents/guardians are asked to sign the report to verify they have been notified of the occurrence/injury. Parents will receive a copy of the report. In the case of a head injury, parents will be provided with a list of signs and symptoms to watch for in their child as head injury symptoms may develop several hours after the injury occurs.

Emergency Situations

The following are plans that the Center will follow during specific emergency situations. Staff are trained regularly in these procedures.

Blizzards: In the event of a blizzard, parents will be contacted if a severe weather warning has been issued. Children will be kept warm, safe, and fed while in the building.

Chemical Spills: If a chemical has been spilled, the Poison Control Center will be called immediately. We will evacuate children outside, if the spill is inside, or keep them inside if the spill is outside. We will wait for information and directions from the Poison Control and contact parents.

Earthquakes: In the event of an earthquake the Center Director will advise staff to take their children to the center classroom and to remain there until the earthquake subsides. Parents will be notified for pick-up.

Fire: The fire alarm will sound and/or verbal notice will be given by a designated staff person(s) for children to exit the building through a door closest to their classroom. Teachers will be responsible for bringing their classroom attendance list and for evacuating the building as quickly as possible. The Center Director will call 911 and check all classrooms, bathrooms, storage areas, etc. for any children who may be still inside.

Flood: If flood warnings have been issued, all staff and children will be notified by the Center Director to move upstairs. If evacuation is necessary, we will go across the street to Scornovacca's restaurant. Parents will be notified to pick up their children at Scornovacca's.

Intruders: If an intruder is on the premises, 911 will be called immediately. The Center Director will move all children into rooms that have doors that can be closed and locked. Doors will be closed and blocked. Children and staff will remain in these rooms until the police have demonstrated to us that it is safe to come out.

Intoxicated Parents: If a parent arrives to pick up their child and is obviously intoxicated, we will ask that parent to remain in the office, while we call a person listed on the emergency contact sheet to come and pick up the child and the parent. If the parent refuses and takes the child, we will contact the police department.

Lost or Abducted Children: If a child becomes lost or abducted, the parent will be notified immediately and 911 will be called.

Power Failure: If the Center should lose power for more than 1 hour, we will begin to contact the parents from cellular phones. Classrooms will be provided with flashlights. Without adequate heat, air conditioning, or cooking appliances, we would not be able to provide quality care to the children and every effort will be made to request parents to pick-up their child.

Tornado: The director(s) will be responsible for keeping an eye on the skies, and an ear to the weather radio. If the weather should become severe, verbal notice will be given to staff. If Polk County issues a tornado warning and/or the sirens go off, the Director will notify the teachers to move the children downstairs. There may be times that we move the children prior to the sirens being sounded due to high winds and/or other potential danger. An emergency pack will be kept at the Center containing flashlights, a battery-operated radio, bottled water and snacks. Children will return to their rooms when the warning has expired.

Nutrition Practices

Children receive breakfast, lunch, and snack each day. Menus are posted on the classroom bulletin boards and sent home with the newsletters monthly. Be sure to look for nutrition information in the newsletter as well.

Children are encouraged to try new foods but are never forced to eat them. Food is never used as a reward or punishment. Meals will be served family style. Your child will learn to pass food, take the desired amount of each food, engage in conversation during mealtimes, and clean up at the end of the meal.

Meal times:

Breakfast	8:30 – 9:00
Lunch	11:30 – 12:00
Snack	2:30-3:00

Religious Food Preferences

Religious preferences will be accommodated although the variety of food offered may be limited. Parents need to put religious requests in writing. Center staff will be happy to work with you to fill out the proper paperwork.

Food Allergies

If a child has a FOOD ALLERGY or intolerance Center Staff must have a note from the child's doctor explaining what foods the child may not have and what foods can be substituted. Please bring a small picture of your child so it can be posted on the food allergy list for easy identification. A food allergy form is posted in each room.

Foods From Home

There is to be NO food or drinks brought in with your child in the morning at drop off. If your child is eating when they enter the classroom, they will need to put it in the garbage, or the parent will need to take it with them.

Recent reoccurring outbreaks of Hepatitis have made it necessary to institute a center policy that forbids families to bring foods that have been prepared at home. While we welcome your desire to participate in our programs, we ask that all food items in the Center be either store bought or prepared at the Center. Birthday and other celebrations can be just as festive if you purchase store bought treats or send in a cake mix for the children to prepare. Please try to keep good nutrition in mind when you are planning these celebrations. Juice pops, ice cream, and even fruit salad can be a wonderful treat.

Curriculum

At Families Forward, we believe that children learn through structure and engagement. Our teachers work hard to ensure that your children are having fun each and every day. We believe that if your child is having fun, we are then able to teach them anything!

Health and Safety

Families Forward Child Development Center reinforces the learning of healthy habits. Classroom activities include outdoor and classroom safety, tooth brushing, hand washing, fire and poison safety, nutrition, automobile and personal safety, expressing feelings, and solving conflicts positively.

Nutrition

Good nutrition helps build healthy children. Nutrition education will be available to both parents and children. We encourage and promote healthy attitudes toward nutrition by exploring food activities. Cooking is a fun and educational activity that parents and children can share together.

Two-Year Old Preschool Programs

We focus on language in our two-year old classroom. This program looks at the individual child and strives to meet his or her needs rather than the child meeting the program's needs. We stimulate both language and cognitive development through the use of puppets and props that motivate and capture the interests of your child. This program is an introduction to the world of learning. Games, art and music are a huge focus in this classroom. All programs are implemented individually or in small groups.

Preschool Program

The learning program or curriculum in each of our classrooms is based on principles of child development, individualization for each child, and culturally relevant practices. Each classroom is arranged in a variety of learning centers to include blocks, table toys (manipulatives), dramatic play and housekeeping corner, art, science, math, literacy, sensory (sand and water), computer, music and movement, and outdoors. As experiences are planned for children in each of the learning centers, the teachers will take into account each child's interests, strengths, needs, and family and cultural background.

Individualization of the program for each child is an important aspect of our program. Each child then has an Individual Child's Plan that includes specific goals and strategies for accomplishing the goals. Individual goals for children are implemented within the daily learning program and supported by the family. Center staff and the parents on an on-going basis review this plan.

Field Trips

Children over the age of three will have the opportunity to participate in Center planned field trips. Field trips give children the opportunity to learn about and explore the surrounding community. A field trip might be a short trip to the neighborhood grocery store or post office or a longer trip to a zoo, museum, or park. Parents are provided advance notice in writing about all center field trips. Specific information concerning the field trip such as destination, times, type of transportation, what to wear and bring along is included in the advance notice.

You will receive a permission form for your child for each field trip taken by the center. You must return the signed permission form to the center by the deadline date, indicating whether your child will participate in the field trip. If you do not want your child to participate in the field trip, then he/she will stay at the center and be placed in another classroom.

For most of our field trips we need parent volunteers to help supervise, which will help make the experience successful and safe for everyone. Two to three children are assigned to one adult during the field trip. Staff take along a backpack that includes first aid materials and copies of the Emergency/Pick-up Authorization Form in case parents need to be contacted for an emergency.

If you have any questions or concerns regarding the information in this handbook, please contact the Center Director. Policies are available in more detail in the office.

USDA 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, audiotape, 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:

mail:

U.S. Department of Agriculture
Office of the Assistant Secretary for Civil Rights
1400 Independence Avenue, SW
Washington, D.C. 20250-9410; or

fax:

(833) 256-1665 or (202) 690-7442; or

email:

Program.Intake@usda.gov

This institution is an equal opportunity provider.