



Parent Handbook

860 Griswold Street
Worthington, Ohio 43085

Phone: 614-885-6656
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GENERAL INFORMATION

PURPOSE

Stepping Stones Learning Center (SSLC) is a ministry of the Worthington Seventh-day Adventist Church (385 E. Dublin-Granville Road, Worthington, OH 43085). The staff and board members are committed to providing high quality, Christian education and care to all children who attend SSLC. We desire to meet the needs of the whole child. We strive to promote the intellectual, physical, emotional, social, and spiritual growth of our students.

LICENSING AND GOVERNING RULES

Stepping Stones Learning Center is licensed as type "A" by the Ohio Department of Jobs and Family Services (ODJFS) and is operated as a child care center, preschool, before and after school care and summer care facility for children ages 6 weeks through 12 years. The Center also meets or exceeds the Franklin County Building and Health Standards, as well as fire codes required by the Worthington Fire Department.

Stepping Stones Learning Center is privately owned and operated as a non-profit 501(c)3 entity. Our license is posted by the office copier for anyone who wishes to review the conditions authorized. A copy of the *Ohio Administrative Code – Child Care Center Rules*, that govern child care centers, is available for review on the premises upon request. You may also visit the ODJFS website to review these regulations. If you have any questions or concerns after talking to the administrator, call the Ohio Department of Jobs and Family Services at 1-866-635-3748, or locally at 614-466-7765.

HOURS OF OPERATION

Our Center is open Monday through Friday, from 7:00 AM to 6:00 PM.

CONTACT INFORMATION

Phone: (614) 885-6656

Fax: (614) 885-6647

General Email Inbox: SSLCWorthington@gmail.com

STAFF/CHILD RATIOS

It is our policy and practice to maintain staff/child ratios set by the state of Ohio Department of Job and Family Services.

Age of Children	Child Care Staff Member/Child Ratio	Maximum Group Size
Young Infants (birth to less than 12 months)	1:5 or 2:12 in same room	12
Older Infants (at least 12 months and less than 18 months)	1:6	12
Young Toddlers (at least 18 months and less than 2 1/2 years)	1:7	14
Older Toddlers (at least 2 1/2 years and less than 3 years)	1:8	16
Young Preschoolers (at least 3 years and less than 4 years)	1:12	24
Older Preschoolers (at least 4 years and not enrolled in or eligible to be enrolled in kindergarten)	1:14	28
Young Schoolagers (enrolled in or eligible to be enrolled in kindergarten or above and less than 11 years)	1:18	36
Older Schoolagers (at least 11 years and less than 15 years)	1:20	40

ENROLLMENT POLICY

Stepping Stones Learning Center holds open registration for each of our two sessions:

- School Year Session - Begins late August and runs through May
- Summer Session - June through August

NEW APPLICATIONS

To enroll a child in SSLC initially, the parent/guardian must tour/interview with the Director and then complete the following forms:

- *Registration Form* – Must be updated yearly
- *Child Enrollment and Health Information* (purple - ODJFS Form #01234) Update yearly
- *Financial Agreement* (green)
- *Emergency Contact Card* (gray card)
- *Child's Medical Statement* (pink – ODJFS Form #01305) Must be completed and signed by the child's physician within 30 days of enrollment and updated annually)
- **TODDLERS ONLY:** *Toddler Daily Care Information Sheet* (yellow)
- **INFANTS ONLY:** *Infant Daily Care Information Sheet* (light pink)
- **INFANTS ONLY:** *Sleep Position Waiver* (ODJFS Form #01235) only with doctor's order.

If your child requires daily medication or has medical condition that needs administered or cared for at the center they must have special forms that address these situations:

- *Child Medical/Physical Care Plan* (ODJFS Form #01236) Only necessary for children with certain medical conditions. See "Medical Policies— Children's Health Records" section.
- *Parent/Guardian Request for Administration of Medication* (ODJFS Form #01217), If applicable see "Medical Policies— Administering Medication"

LESS THAN FULL-TIME ENROLLMENT

Stepping Stones defers to full time enrollments. Part-time enrollment is an option when there are openings in a classroom. As the classroom fills part-time families may be asked to share their week with another part-time family. If a "sharing" situation cannot be negotiated, part-time families will be asked to either go to full-time to keep their slot or give up their slot so that we are able to accommodate another family waiting for a full-time opening in that classroom.

WAITING LIST POLICY

In the event a particular classroom is full, parents may elect to have their name placed on a waiting list to be notified should a slot become available.

There is no charge to be placed on the waiting list. However, parents may choose to pay the Registration Fee to guarantee a place within the classroom for their child when it becomes available. Paid registrations will be given the next known available opening. Sometimes

opportunities open up unexpectedly (such as when a family moves out of the area, etc.). In that event, families who have guaranteed slots will be offered the newly-opened slots first.

Should a family not be ready to enroll when their guaranteed slot becomes available, they may choose to pay tuition to hold that slot for their child, or they may opt to wait for the next opening.

As a general rule, openings within the classrooms are filled on a first-registered, first-served basis. The Director reserves the right to enroll families based on the scheduling needs of the family, age and maturity level of the child, classroom dynamics, etc.

CANCELLATION OF CHILDCARE

Stepping Stones Learning Center requires a two-week notice in writing to the Director if you plan to withdraw your child from our program. We also reserve the right to discontinue childcare services under the following conditions:

- Failure of the parents to abide by terms of their Financial Agreement.
- Failure of the parents to support and abide by Learning Center policies as outlined in this *Parent Handbook* and any supplemental handouts or notices.
- Behavior of the child which frequently disrupts the learning environment poses harm to others.
- The mental, physical, or emotional needs of the child prohibit appropriate participation in the activities of the school.

BEFORE & AFTER SCHOOL PROGRAM

SSLC provides before and after school care primarily for WAA students. We do not provide transportation for children to and from the various local elementary schools. School age care before and after school is available from 7:00 to 7:45 AM and from 3:15 to 6:00 PM Monday through Thursday and 2:15 to 6:00 PM Friday. A snack is served after school.

SCHOOL DAYS OFF

Parents must sign-up for child care for school age children in advance when schools are scheduled to be closed for: holidays, teacher in-service days, conferences, etc. We will make every effort to have a current calendar of Worthington City Schools, Columbus City Schools, and WAA schedules of school closings for reference, but it is the parent's responsibility to verify and schedule care for those days. Lunches and snacks are included for occasional care.

SNOW DAYS

The Center will endeavor to be fully staffed in the event of school closings for snow emergencies. Snow Day care will be available on a first-come, first-served basis. Being signed up for the Before and After Care program does not guarantee school age child care on snow days. Parents must call ahead to confirm that space is available before bringing their child. We can only provide care if we have staffing to maintain state required ratios. The more advance notice we receive, the better we will be able to accommodate each child. Parents are asked to please pack a lunch for their child on the snow days their child attends SSLC.

PAYMENT

Payment for snow days and school closing days is expected before care is provided.

FINANCIAL POLICY

Tuition is based on enrollment, not attendance. Your payment reserves your child's place in our program, with no deductions for absences or holidays, except as noted under the "Vacation Time or Extended Illness" section of this *Handbook*.

Each child's tuition is to be paid in full on the first business day of each week. Stepping Stones Learning Center counts on parents to be timely and consistent in their financial obligations to us, so that we may in turn be timely and consistent in our financial obligations to others.

- Any time an account accrues an outstanding balance of \$50 or more, Stepping Stones reserves the right to refuse service until the account is paid in full.
- Post-dated checks will not be considered as payment until the date they are valid
- Should an account go unpaid even after reasonable attempts by Stepping Stones to address the issue, we reserve the right to turn the account over to a collection agency to seek payment.

REGISTRATION FEE

Registrations fees are assessed upon a child newly being enrolled. Registration fees are non-refundable. Your child's place in our program is reserved only after we have received payment of the registration fee. See the most current Tuition/Fee Schedule for amounts.

There is a discount for Registration Fees for families enrolling more than one child in our program (see Current Fee Schedule).

WEEKLY TUITION

Tuition is due on the first day of each week. Families enrolling more than one child in one of our programs will receive a 10% discount on the weekly tuition fee for each additional child. In the cases where children are enrolled in programs with different tuition rates, the 10% discount will be applied to the lower cost program.

Parents withdrawing their child from a Stepping Stones Learning Center program must give two weeks prior written notice to this effect. Parents not giving written prior notice may be charged up to two weeks additional tuition.

ADDITIONAL PROGRAM FEES

Activity/Materials Fees: SSLC takes the students on many field trips throughout the year and invites a number of guest educational entertainers to the Center to provide special programming for the children we serve. Two Activity/Materials Fees are assessed each year to help defray the expense required for such activities. One is due in **September** and may be paid over two months: September and October. The other Activity/Materials Fee is assessed the beginning of **June**. A minimal Activity Fee is assessed once a year for older infants (Shooting Stars) and toddlers (Twinkler I & II).

Diapers/Pull-Ups, Swimmers and/or Wipes Fees: Parents of infants and toddlers not yet potty trained are expected to supply all the diapers/pull-ups and wipes as needed during the time their children spends at the Learning Center. The parents should check in with their child's teacher to make sure there is an adequate supply of these items on hand daily. If during the course of a day the supply should be depleted, the teacher will replace items as needed from Learning Center stock at a rate of \$1.00 per diaper, swimmer or pull-up, fees will be assessed to the parent's account to be paid no later than when tuition is due the following week. Parents of preschoolers may also be charged for pull-ups should their child have potty accidents at the Center and have no extra clothes/underwear to change into.

Late Pickup Fee: Parents who pick up their children after closing time will be charged a Late Pickup fee of \$1.00 for every minute after 6:00 PM that they are late on the third and subsequent late pickups during the calendar year. Parents will be asked to sign a Late Pickup acknowledgement form at that time. Late pickup fees must be paid in full at the time of the next scheduled tuition payment.

NSF/Returned Check Fee: There will be a \$25.00 charge for NSF checks. After two NSF checks, only cash or money orders will be accepted for payment of the student's account.

VACATION TIME OR EXTENDED ILLNESS

Three weeks' vacation time per year is allowed for children attending our program year-round. Please notify the Director in writing two weeks prior to vacation. Parents who give prior notification will be eligible for a 50% reduction in the weekly tuition for each full week their child is absent. Without notification, the student's account will be charged a full week's tuition. For students attending the summer session only, two weeks' vacation time at the 50% rate is allowed.

If a child is absent due to an extended illness (missing more than three days in a scheduled week), parents can receive a 50% reduction for that week's tuition if they notify the Director or Office Manager of the illness.

OUR PROGRAM

PROGRAM DESCRIPTION

SSLC provides meaningful experiences for the children through activities that promote pre-academic skills (science, math, reading, music, art, language arts, social studies and dramatic play), large and small motor development, as well as nurturing their spiritual and social/emotional development. These educational experiences enhance the harmonious development of the academic, social, spiritual, and physical abilities of each child. During these activities, the children have opportunity to establish positive relationships with adults and peers outside of their family.

PHILOSOPHY OF EDUCATION

Stepping Stones Learning Center provides a holistic learning environment. The teachers and curriculum will provide meaningful instruction and activities that nurture the spiritual, intellectual, social, emotional, and physical growth of children. This is accomplished through activities that encourage discovery, experience, and investigation as well as social interaction for each child in an environment that is enriching and developmentally-appropriate. As a child-centered institution:

- We believe the first seven years of life are the most important in the formation of a child's sense of self and character development;
- We believe the cooperative interaction between the parent, teacher, and child is integral to the positive development and future success of the child;
- We believe the nurturing of self-esteem is critical to the child's overall development and future success in school and life in general;

- We believe through social interaction a child develops an acceptance of others, an increased awareness of him/herself and enhanced opportunities to develop social/emotional intelligence/skills.

DAILY SCHEDULE

A detailed schedule of your child's particular class is posted outside his/her classroom door for easy reference. Classroom schedules are subject to change to meet the needs and developmental stages of the children. Sample schedules may be found in the appendix of this handbook.

OUTDOOR PLAY

Stepping Stones Learning Center provides two fenced-in, outdoor playgrounds that contain slides, swings, climbing apparatus, riding toys and sandboxes. The infant and toddler playground is located on the west side of the center and the preschool playground is located on the north side of the center. In addition, we also have a school age playground and sports field on the west side of our campus which is utilized during after school care and the school age summer program. All children, particularly those in attendance for four or more consecutive hours per day, will have opportunity for outdoor play when the weather is suitable. In the event of inclement weather, the Worthington Seventh-day Adventist Church's activity center/gymnasium (located on our campus) is available for large muscle activity.

NAP TIME

Older infants, toddlers, preschool and pre-K students will rest/nap every day for 2 hours sometime between 12:30 and 3:00pm. Teachers are to make quiet activities available to children who are unable to fall asleep after the first hour of nap time. Parents are encouraged to provide small pillows and blankets for their children to sleep with. Children are also welcome to bring a favorite stuffed animal to nap with if they would like to. All bedding and stuffed animals will be sent home at the end of each week to be washed. Toddlers, preschool and pre-K students will rest on cots especially designated for them. The cots will be disinfected at least weekly. Infants will rest/sleep in cribs. When school age children are present for the day, they will rest on a mat for one hour, during which time they made read quietly.

PLEASE REMEMBER THAT NAP TIME IS "SACRED" Nap time is not a good time to bring your child to the center. They naturally will express their disappointment at arriving at a time when they are expected to lie down and rest. This will disrupt the much-needed rest of the other children who have arrived early and have participated in an active morning program. Ratios may double for 2 hours in each classroom except the infants during nap time as long as all children are resting quietly on their cots. This gives the teachers an opportunity to take an hour lunch break. ***Please bring your child at least one hour before nap time is scheduled for their classroom*** so that they have time to socialize and play with their peers. This greatly reduces frustration and unhappiness.

DIAPERING

Parents are expected to provide diapers and wipes for their child. Diapers are checked every two hours at a minimum. If the child is wet or soiled the diaper will be changed. Diaper checks are logged on your child's daily sheet.

FIELD TRIPS

In an effort to enrich and expand the children's learning experiences, SSLC plans many age-appropriate field trips for our students during the school year program, as well, as for our summer program. Parents will be given advance notice of each field trip via the SSLC Newsletter and permission slips. Information detailing location, activity, departure/return times, as well as any additional information specific to the event, will be made available. Parents are required to sign a written permission slip for each trip in order for their child to participate. ***We cannot take your child on ANY field trip without your specific written permission for that trip.***

Stepping Stones Learning Center will make sure each field trip is adequately staffed to maintain required adult/child ratios. SSLC staff will carry a roster listing the names of every child in attendance on that trip, and will frequently count, check, and verify that all children in their charge are accounted for throughout the duration of the trip.

Each child will wear a red t-shirt provided by SSLC that lists the Center's name, address and phone number on every field trip. Wrist bands with the Center's name and phone number are worn by each child under our care during a swimming trip. Staff members trained in first aid and CPR will attend the children on all field trips. Emergency authorization/health records for each child will be taken on every trip, and a first aid kit and cell phone will be readily available in the event of an emergency.

A chartered bus will be used for transportation to and from field trips. Children will be properly restrained by a harness system as appropriate and required for the child's age and weight. It is our policy to use a harness system on bus trips for all children less than 8 years old or weighing less than 80 pounds whichever comes last. This harness system meets all federal motor vehicle safety standards. School age children may go on "walking" field trips to nearby destinations such as a local park and the Worthington Library. SSLC staff members will make sure that all children use appropriate routes—staying on sidewalks and using crosswalks—and take all appropriate safety measures while walking from and to the center. **A signed, written permission form is required before any child may participate in a walking field trip.**

If a parent does not sign the written permission form on or before the day of the scheduled field trip or arrives at the Center after the scheduled time of departure, their child may join a younger class or sit with a staff member working in the office or kitchen until his/her class returns to the Learning Center.

SWIMMING FIELD TRIPS

Children ages 4 and older may have the opportunity to participate in field trips that involve swimming. During these field trips children will be assigned to a care provider at the ratio of 1:7. A certified lifeguard will be on duty. The ratio in the water remains 1:7, and the caregiver

must be in the water with the children performing visual checks on the children assigned to them. Safety breaks are followed on schedule with the visited pool. Permission slips will be completed by the parent or guardian prior to the field trip.

ROUTINE TRIPS TO VOTAW

The Votaw is a large gross motor room where children can run, jump, and climb. Children ages 12 months and older may participate in “walking field trips” or buggy rides to the gym and Votaw. Parents will be asked to fill out a routine walking field trip permission form, valid for one year, to make the trip over.

FOR INFANTS AND TODDLERS ONLY: Infants and younger toddlers do not go on field trips off campus, due to safety issues. They will, however, participate as developmentally appropriate when we host special features such as: entertainers, story tellers, traveling zoo/pet programs, etc. This allows us to provide enjoyable learning experiences for our infants/toddlers without leaving campus. They may also go on stroller rides on campus. A minimum of two staff members must be present with a cell phone readily available during the stroller ride and required teacher/child ratios must be maintained.

PROMOTION OF CHILDREN

Children will be promoted to the next age-level program/classroom based on: their age, developmental readiness, school year or summer session cycle, and availability of space in the classroom. Guidelines for when children will be promoted are as follows:

INFANTS: (*Stars & Shooting Stars*) Accepted when they are between the ages of 6 weeks and 18 months old. Will be promoted when they are 18 months old, show developmental readiness and space is available in the Toddler program.

TODDLERS: (*Twinkler I & Twinkler II*) Accepted when they are between the ages of 18 months and 36 months old. Will be promoted when they are three years old and demonstrate developmental readiness.

PRESCHOOL: (*Sparklers & Comets*) Accepted when they turn three years old and demonstrate developmental readiness. Preschool children must be fully potty trained.

PRE-KINDERGARTEN: (*Firecrackers*) Accepted into the school year session as young as three years old, provided the child turns four by September 30th of the current school year.

SCHOOL AGE: Accepted from Kindergarten age up through twelve years old.

TRANSITIONS

TRANSITIONS INTO SSLC

We enjoy having new students enroll at SSLC. We want their transition into our center to be as smooth and pleasant as possible. Below are a few recommended procedures that may help to ensure a smooth transition.

- Tour our facility with your child prior to attending.
- Observe the class your child will attend with your child present allowing them to interact with the other children, the learning environment and their new teacher.
- Fill out required paperwork
 - Registration Form (WHITE)
 - Child Enrollment & Health Information Form (PURPLE – ODJFS Form #01234)
 - Child's Medical Statement (PINK – ODJFS Form #01305) Must be completed and signed by the child's physician within 30 days of enrollment and updated annually)
- Pay Registration Fee, Activity/Materials Fee & First Week's Tuition before admission.

TRANSITIONS WITHIN SSLC

When it is time for your child to move to another classroom within the center, several factors will be considered. First and foremost is the age and development of the child. Availability of space in the classroom will also be factored into the decision. The Director will contact the parent by letter. The parent's opinion on the transition will also be taken into consideration. This Transition Letter must be signed by the parent and returned to the Director before the transition takes place.

TRANSITIONS OUT OF SSLC

We understand that you may face circumstances that make it necessary or are in the best interest of your child to end their enrollment in SSLC. Please follow the following steps to ensure a smooth transition for all concerned.

- Give SSLC a minimum 2 week notice in writing.
- Provide an opportunity for your child to say goodbye to their teacher and classmates.
- Remember to take your child's belongings, projects, papers and art work home with you.
- Make sure all accounts are paid in full.

TRANSITIONS FROM SSLC TO WORTHINGTON ADVENTIST ACADEMY (WAA) KINDERGARTEN

Our partner school, Worthington Adventist Academy, offers an excellent, full-day Kindergarten program. Many SSLC parents like the conveniences afforded them by sending their Kindergarteners to WAA. If you would like to explore this option, you will want to know the following:

- Each spring WAA conducts a “Kindergarten Round-Up”. Your child may participate in a scheduled morning session in the WAA Kindergarten room under the direction of the Kindergarten teacher.
- If you are interested in having your child attend WAA, the Kindergarten teacher will administer a development readiness assessment of each prospective student.
- The WAA Kindergarten teacher will meet with each parent and discuss the test results and may recommend enrollment depending on developmental readiness.
- Parents will be given an application package.
- WAA will host a New Student/Parent Orientation before the next school year begins.

CHILD GUIDANCE AND MANAGEMENT

Stepping Stones Learning Center believes mutual trust, fairness and consistency are fundamental to a child’s development. Staff members help children learn self-control and acceptable behavior through positive, gentle guidance that is consistent and developmentally appropriate for the child. Limits are set on behavior that might harm a child, damage property, or infringe on the rights of others. The following methods will be used in the guidance and management of children’s behavior at the Learning Center:

- Positive feedback is given to children for appropriate behavior. Staff members freely and frequently give hugs, eye contact, smiles, attention, and verbal feedback to the child.
- For non-harmful inappropriate behavior, the child will be redirected to another appropriate activity.
- If the behavior is harmful, the behavior is immediately stopped and the danger is explained clearly and concisely to the child. In these situations, the child will be given the choice to correct the behavior and rejoin the group or be removed from the group to a “time-out” place in the room to provide an opportunity to think or cool-off before he/she may return to the group activity. Time-outs are not to exceed one minute per year of the child’s age.
- Any time a child acts out inappropriately, the child’s teacher(s) will attempt to determine the cause of the undesirable behavior (such as being tired, hungry, or

distressed). The teacher will then work with the child to help counteract that circumstance (for instance, offering the child a snack or a quiet individual activity away from the group activity) in order to help the child recover and rejoin the group.

- If the undesirable behavior continues after the classroom teachers have done all they can to gain the child's compliance, the Educational Coordinator may be called into the room to assist and coach the child. If the problem behavior remains unresolved the child may be brought to the office for counsel with the Director. Depending on the nature of the disruption, the Director may call the child's parents to discuss the situation or schedule a conference.

It is very important that parents/guardians and SSLC staff work together harmoniously. Each will need to help the other understand the child and support and reinforce appropriate/positive behaviors. By doing so, we can make the early educational experience a happy and profitable one for the children.

Under no circumstances will any member of our staff ever:

- Abuse or neglect children;
- Utilize cruel, harsh, unusual, or extreme techniques;
- Utilize ANY form of corporal punishment;
- Delegate children to manage or discipline other children;
- Use physical restraints on a child, or restrain a child by any means other than holding children for a short period of time, such as in a protective hug, so that children may regain control;
- Place children in a locked room or confine children in any enclosed area;
- Confine children to equipment such as cribs or high chairs;
- Humiliate, threaten or frighten children;
- Subject children to profane language or verbal abuse;
- Make derogatory or sarcastic remarks about children and their families;
- Punish children for failure to eat or sleep, or for toileting accidents;
- Withhold any food (including snacks or treats), rest, or toilet use;
- Punish an entire group of children due to the unacceptable behavior of one or a few; or
- Isolate and restrict children from all activities for an extended period of time.

This policy extends to ALL ADULTS while they are on our campus, including parents/guardians of children, any visitors, etc.

At no time may an adult outside of the SSLC staff reprimand, threaten or punish another person's child on the SSLC campus. If an adult is displeased with the behavior of a child who is not their own, they may discuss the situation with the classroom teacher and then accept the authority and judgment of the teacher. If the displeased parent remains unsatisfied that their complaint/concern has not been taken seriously or appropriate measures may not have been taken, they may address their continued concerns with the Director.

CONFLICT RESOLUTION BETWEEN PEERS

While opinions with regard to self-defense and retaliation vary, here at SSLC we will follow the admonition of the Apostle Paul found in Romans 12:17-21 and teach the children not to "return evil for evil". If a child is mistreated by a peer, they should promptly report the mistreatment to the teacher. The teacher will then assist the children in resolving the conflict and discipline the offending child if needed. Children who are feeling mistreated or threatened by a peer will be taught to seek the direct supervision and intervention of their teachers. Parents who enroll their children in our program are expected to support this philosophy with regard to conflict between children.

PERMANENT DISENROLLMENT FROM THE PROGRAM

If at any time administration deems necessary, a child may be permanently dis-enrolled from the program. Instances include, but are not limited to, a child's behavior being a safety threat to themselves, the staff, or other children and staff being unable to properly care for or instruct the other children or your child, and uncontrollable behavior.

PARENT PARTICIPATION AND COMMUNICATION

At Stepping Stones, we believe it is vital for the parent and the Center staff to work together to ensure that the needs of your family and your child are being met. Your participation in SSLC activities and your comments are always welcome.

OPEN DOOR POLICY

Parents are always welcome to visit at any time during normal business hours, from 7:00AM to 6:00PM. We are proud of our Center and welcome your comments and support. If you wish to observe in your child's classroom, please notify the front office.

We understand that you will want to check in with your child's teacher to ask about your child's experience each day. Because the teacher is responsible for the supervision of the other children, these checks must remain brief. If you desire an extended conversation with your child's teacher, please request a scheduled meeting time with them. That way the teacher can work with the director to arrange for coverage for their classroom. Parent/teacher conferences are scheduled three times during the school year, in November, February, and again in May for preschool students. This is an appropriate time to discuss more detailed and

specific information. A conference may be scheduled at any time upon your request through the Center's Director.

The Director is usually available between 8:00a.m. to 4:30 p.m. to assist parents and address concerns they may have as they relate to the Center and their child's care. If the Director is not on campus, the Office Manager or Assistant Director will relay a message or request on your behalf. Parents deserve clear and open communication. Consequently, we will do our best to get back to you within 24 hours, if not sooner.

INFANT AND TODDLER DAILY CHECK-IN

Parents of infants and toddlers are asked to check-in directly with their child's teacher before leaving their child each day. At that time, parents should fill out the requested information found on the top of their child's Daily Care Log sheet. This information is very helpful to the teacher in understanding what special needs your child might have that day.

WRITTEN COMMUNICATION

PRESCHOOL/PRE-KINDERGARTEN: Teachers fill out **Daily Activity Reports** for each child enrolled in the Preschool and Pre-K programs. These reports give a general overview of the child's day: what activities the child did that day, if the child ate lunch or took a nap, etc.

INFANTS/TODDLERS: Teachers fill out **Daily Care Logs** for each child under their care in the Infant and Toddler Programs. These reports give a general overview of the child's day: what activities the class did, what/how much the child ate for lunch, diaper changes/toileting information, how long the child napped, needed supplies, etc.

Each class has a central location where these reports, logs, art work and projects/papers are stored for parent pick-up. Please collect these items daily.

OTHER MEANS OF WRITTEN COMMUNICATION

In addition to **Daily Reports** and **Care Logs**, SSLC communicates with parents through a twice monthly newsletter, letters and memos, e-mail (SSLCWorthington@gmail.com) and our Facebook Page.

PARENT ROSTER

Parents whose children attend SSLC may request a parent roster from the front office. This roster lists parent's names and phone numbers by class. To opt out of the parent roster, please check the appropriate box on the Child Enrollment and Health Information form (ODJFS Form #01234) when registering your child.

CUSTODY/VISITATION ORDERS

SSLC will make every effort to accommodate and communicate with custodial and non-custodial parents/guardians of children attending our center. However, if there are special circumstances that have been ordered by a court of law regarding custody, visitation, restrictions on visitation, etc., and the custodial parent must inform the Director of such circumstances upon enrolling their child, or as soon as the order is in effect after their child is enrolled.

Stepping Stones must have on file copies of any court order that restricts or prohibits contact/visitation by any person, regardless of whether they are related to the child or not, in order to support/enforce such restrictions.

Should a person, whose contact with a child attending the Center is restricted or prohibited, attempt to gain access to that child at the Center, he/she will be asked to leave immediately. If they refuse to comply, the authorities (911) will be called to remedy the situation. Teachers will also be alerted to the situation so they can make sure all the children are in a safe and secure location until any potential danger has passed.

SPECIAL EVENTS AND FIELD TRIPS

Stepping Stones Learning Center plans different special events throughout the year that we encourage parents to participate in. These events may range from parties/programs celebrating holidays, to fundraiser events, to special programs where the children have an opportunity to demonstrate skills they have learned during the summer or school year session.

Parents are also welcome to join his/her child's class on scheduled field trips. Please let your child's teacher know when you are interested and able to accompany the class on a field trip.

BIRTHDAY CELEBRATIONS

Birthday parties cannot be hosted at the Learning Center for various reasons. However, a parent may send in one simple treat to recognize the child's birthday. Due to individual dietary restrictions, please check with your child's teacher before bringing the treat to SSLC. At the teachers' discretion, the treat will be shared with the class after lunch or at the afternoon snack time.

FAMILY DYNAMICS

Various events and circumstances can impact a child's life in a significant way: the death of a pet or family member, birth of a new sibling, relocation, marital separation, to mention a few. It may be in your child's best interest to alert their teacher to a significant change in circumstances be it positive or negative. This will hopefully yield a better understanding between you, your child and his/her teacher. You should expect and receive the strictest confidentiality upon request.

ADDRESSING QUESTIONS OR CONCERNS

Questions or concerns should first be presented to the Learning Center Director. Should the problem remain unresolved, parents should contact the Center's Advisory Board Chairperson. If the problem is not resolved after taking these measures, parents should contact the Ohio Department of Jobs and Family Services at 1-866-635-3748 or locally at 614-466-7765.

ASSESSMENTS

Children will be assessed informally through observation. These results will not be shared with ODJFS. No formal assessments are done at this time.

CHILDREN'S CLOTHING AND OTHER BELONGINGS

CLOTHING

Parents should dress their children in comfortable play clothing that follow these guidelines:

- The child should be able to dress independently after toileting, nap, outdoor play, etc. (pull-on pants, shoes with Velcro fasteners, large buttons/snaps, etc.).
- Clothes should be comfortable to wear and be active in, as well as easy to clean. Art materials such as markers, paints, etc. used at the Center are washable, but a typical day at SSLC is full of adventures that could result in dirt, spills, stains, etc. Clothing that cannot get stained/dirty is not appropriate.
- Clothes should be seasonally appropriate. Because we go outside to play weather permitting (40 degrees+ and to play in the snow), children need clothing that will keep them a comfortable temperature indoors and out. Layers that can be removed are recommended. Coats, hats, mittens are needed for cold days (40 degrees+). In addition, boots are needed for play in the snow.
- Shoes should be sturdy, fit well, and protect the toes and heels from injury. Children will be running, jumping, climbing, etc. during their day at the Learning Center. Sneakers/athletic shoes are preferred. ***Flip-flops, high heels/platform-type shoes, shoes that can easily slip off while the child is playing or do not protect the foot from injury, etc., are not appropriate.***
- All children younger than Kindergarten age must have one full set of clean clothes in their baskets (shirt, underwear, pants, and socks) in case of a diaper/toileting or other accident. ***Please Note:*** Staff members will clean up children who have had toileting accidents and help them change into clean clothes, but they will not be responsible for "scrubbing out" the soiled clothes, due to the potential for spreading communicable diseases. The Ohio Department of Health and the Ohio Department of Jobs and Family Services have strict policies regarding this procedure. Soiled clothes will be double

bagged and given to parents to take home and launder or dispose of at the end of the day.

FOR INFANTS ONLY: Given the fact that infants are likely to burp-up, spit-up, poop, drool, spill, etc. we strongly recommend that parents keep *at least* 2 or 3 complete changes of clothes at SSLC for their child. Staff will clean up the child and change him/her into clean clothes whenever necessary. Soiled clothes will be placed in a plastic bag and given to parents to take home and launder at the end of the day.

DIAPERS, PULL-UPS, AND WIPES

Parents are expected to provide all the diapers/pull-ups and wipes their child will need during his/her time at the Learning Center. Cubbies/closets are provided in the classroom to store such items. Parents should make sure that their child's diaper/pull-up packs and wipes containers are clearly marked with their child's name. Teachers will make notes on each child's Daily Care Log when they notice supplies are running low.

Should any of these supplies become depleted, the teacher will replace items as needed from the Learning Center stock at a rate of \$1.00 per diaper or pull-up, and 50¢ per packet of 10 wipes used. Parents will be asked to sign a charge form when they come to pick up their child that day indicating the amount of each item that was used. Parents may pay the fee at that time, or pay it with the following week's tuition.

DIAPER CREAMS/OINTMENTS

Parents must complete a "Request for Administration of Medication" form (ODJFS Form #01217) before any diaper cream/ointment may be applied during a diaper change performed by an SSLC staff member here at the Center.

SLEEP WAIVER

A Sleep Waiver (ODJFS Form #01235) must be completed by the child's physician and parent if for medical reasons a child should be placed on their stomach to sleep or sleep in a swing/car seat. Otherwise, care givers are required by state law to lay an infant to sleep on their back.

BOOKS, TOYS AND OTHER ITEMS

Children are naturally dismayed when a toy belonging to them is broken or lost. Toys brought to the Center from home easily become a source of conflict among the children at the Learning Center. ***Please leave all personal toys at home***—with the exception of a stuffed animal for naptime. Stepping Stones will not be responsible or liable for any of these items when they become lost, broken, or misplaced.

For health and hygiene reasons, we request that children not bring any lip balm/chap stick or make-up to the SSLC.

BREASTFEEDING

A nursing mother is welcome to breastfeed her child at any time in the center. There is a rocking chair near the cribs in the young infant room, or she may choose to use any of the other chairs in either of the infant rooms. Pumping can be done in these rooms as well, or you may ask an administrator to find a more private location if one is available.

LABELING ITEMS

All items children bring to the Learning Center should be clearly marked with the child's name. This includes lunchboxes, clothing, coats, sweaters, boots, nap-time items, etc. Staff members make every effort to keep track of each child's belongings which is more doable when items are clearly marked.

MEDICAL POLICIES

CHILDREN'S HEALTH RECORDS

All children attending Stepping Stones Learning Center must have record of a physical examination by a licensed physician on file in the Learning Center office no later than 30 days from the first day of attendance. This medical report must contain a current record of the child's immunizations and be updated annually by the physician. This requires that the child have a yearly physical. Child's Medical Statement forms (Pink – ODJFS Form #01305) are available in the Learning Center office.

Parents/guardians of children who have chronic medical conditions that are potentially life-threatening (severe allergies, asthma, etc.) or a history of recurring medical problems (seizures, etc.) must complete a Child Medical/Physical Care Plan form (ODJFS Form #01236) to provide our staff with an action plan should your child's condition require treatment while they are at SSLC. These forms are available in the Learning Center office. A parent or other certified trainer must show the child's teacher and the Director what danger signs to watch for and the proper method of administering treatment.

Should the child's condition require medication, such as an inhaler or epi pen, etc., parents must also complete and sign a Parent/Guardian Request for Administration (ODJFS Form #01217). Please see the "Administering Medication" section below for more information.

ADMINISTERING MEDICATION

Home is the safest place to administer medications. Please request administration of medication from SSLC staff only when it is absolutely necessary during the child care day.

Should a child require medications, vitamins, cough drops, lotions, lip balm, hand sanitizer, diaper cream/ointment, sunscreen, etc. or a special diet while at school, parents must complete and sign a Parent/Guardian Request for Administration of Medication (ODJFS Form #01217) each time medication needs to be administered. These forms are available in the office.

All medications, etc. will be stored in the Learning Center office, unless they are for a life-threatening condition (i.e., epi pens and inhalers) – in which case they will be stored in the child's classroom with the first aid supplies. A refrigerator is available for medications that must be kept cold.

If a child is going to have an allergic reaction to a new medication, it will likely be soon after the first dosage. Therefore, we ask that parents administer the first dose to their child at home and monitor his/her reaction before bringing their child to the Center and asking us to administer the medication.

Stepping Stones staff will keep an accurate log of all doses of the medication administered, noting dosage amount, time given, and name of the staff member who administered each dose. Products containing aspirin, codeine, or fluoride supplements may not be administered here at the Center under any circumstances.

In addition, the following procedures will be followed:

PRESCRIPTION MEDICATION/LOTIONS AND FOOD SUPPLEMENTS–

- Parents must fill out and sign the appropriate portion of the Request for Administration of Medication form (ODFJS Form #01217). Please provide very specific instruction. Simply “as needed” is considered insufficient. Indicate specific symptoms to look for and provide specific time of day.
- Prescription medications must be in the **original container** with the child's full name, current date (within the last 12 months), and the physician's instructions as to exact dosage, duration and means of administration.
- If for any reason the medication does not have a prescription label, such as in the case of samples given by the doctor's office, **the child's doctor** must fill out and sign Box 2 of the Request for Administration of Medication form.
- Parents must inform their child's teacher and administrative staff about the medication, what it is being used for, and demonstrate any special procedures required to administer, if necessary.
- At the end of the treatment period, the medication container (and any remaining medication, if applicable) will be returned to the parent, or safely discarded by the Learning Center.

NON-PRESCRIPTION (OVER-THE-COUNTER) MEDICATION, LOTIONS, CREAMS AND OINTMENTS.

- Parents must fill out and sign the appropriate portion of the Request for Administration of Medication form (ODFJS Form #01217). Please provide very specific instruction. Simply “as needed” is considered insufficient. Indicate specific symptoms to look for and provide specific time of day.

- Medication must be brought to the Center in ***the original container*** and clearly marked with the child's name.
- Box 2 of the Request for Administration of Medication form must be completed and signed by ***the child's doctor*** for nonprescription medication if the child does not meet the age and weight requirements per the dosage instructions on the label.
- Parents must inform their child's teacher and administrative staff about the medication, what it is being used for, and demonstrate any special procedures required to administer, if necessary.
- Non-prescription medication can be administered for a maximum of three consecutive days in a 14-day period.
- Topical products are classified into two groups: preventative and treatment. If a topical product is used for preventative purposes such as sun screen, lip balm and routine use of diaper cream the Request for Administration of Medication is valid for 12 months. If a topical product is treating a skin irritation, such as diaper rash then we may not administer the product for more than 14 days. If the skin irritation needs further treatment, Box 2 of the Request for Administration of Medication form must be completed and signed by ***the child's doctor*** to continue administration of the topical product.
- At the end of the treatment period, the medication container (and any remaining medication, if applicable) will be returned to the parent, or safely discarded by the Learning Center.
- We cannot administer homemade remedies.

SUNSCREEN—

- Parents should apply sunscreen to their child's skin in the morning before bringing their child to the Learning Center. This way, the child will be ready to participate in any morning outdoor activities or field trips upon arrival.
- Parents must fill out and sign the appropriate portion of the Request for Administration of Medication form (ODFJS Form #01217). Sunscreen brought to the Center must be in the original container and clearly marked with their child's name.
- Sunscreen will be kept in the child's classroom and will be reapplied as needed throughout the day by a Stepping Stones staff member. School-age children will apply sunscreen themselves under the supervision of a staff member.
- Sunscreen can be administered as needed for up to a year from the date of the Request for Administration of Medication form. A log will not be kept of each application.

Please Note: The above procedures will apply to school-age children (kindergarten or above) as well. School-age children will be allowed to administer their own medication ONLY IF their parents have specified in writing on the Request for Administration of Medication form that the child is capable of doing so and has their parent's permission to do so.

FOOD SUPPLEMENTS OR MEDICAL FOOD

If your child has is on any type of food supplement or medical food form 01217, Request for administration of medication, must be complete and kept on file for each medication or food.

ACCIDENTS AND INJURIES

Every precaution is taken to make sure each child will be safe from harm while attending SSLC. However, on occasion, accidents do happen. Staff members are trained in First Aid and CPR procedures. First Aid kits are kept in each classroom, as well as in the Learning Center office, and will be taken with the group when they go outside to the playground, to the gym and on every field trip. A Medical Emergency Action Plan is posted in each classroom for immediate reference.

Stepping Stones Learning Center does not transport children in the event of a medical emergency. Should a child need to be transported for further medical treatment, an ambulance will be called for life-threatening emergencies, otherwise the parent will be given the option to pick up their child or have an ambulance called to transport their child.

In the event of a minor accident/injury (bumps, scrapes, bruises, etc.)—

- Staff will administer First Aid as necessary and comfort the child.
- Staff will make sure all other children are properly supervised, in no danger of harming themselves, and are not interfering with the care for the injured child.
- An *Incident/Injury Report Form* (ODJFS Form #01299) detailing the incident will be filled out by a staff member who witnessed it, signed by the reporting staff member and the Director.
- The injured child will be monitored through the rest of the day to make sure there are no additional concerns/complaints as a result of the injury. If another concern arises, teachers and the Director will determine if additional treatment is necessary or if the child's parent should be contacted.
- Parents must review and sign the Incident/Injury Report Form when they arrive to pick up their child at the end of the day, and a copy of the form will be given to them.

In the event of a more serious accident/injury—

- Staff will administer First Aid as necessary and comfort the child.
- Staff will make sure all other children are properly supervised, in no danger of harming themselves, and are not interfering with the care for the injured child.

- The Director or available staff member will call the injured child's parents/guardians and notify them of the incident. The Director and the parent will then determine if the child is able to remain at the Center or should be picked up by the parent.
- If it is agreed that the injured child should stay at the Center, he/she will be monitored through the rest of the day to make sure there are no additional concerns/complaints as a result of the injury. If another concern arises, teachers and the Director will determine if additional treatment is necessary and contact the parent again.
- If the child is unable to stay at the Center, parents must make arrangements to have their child picked up as soon as possible and arrange for additional medical attention or care for their child, if necessary.
- An Incident/Injury Report Form (ODJFS Form #01299) detailing the incident will be filled out by a staff member who witnessed it, signed by the reporting staff member and the Director.
- Parents must review and sign the Incident/Injury Report Form when they arrive to pick up their child at the end of the day, and copy will be given to them.

In the event of a life-threatening accident/injury—

SSLC Will not care for a child if you do not give permission to transport in the event of an emergency (signature required on page 3 of the ODJFS 01234 enrollment form).

- Staff will administer First Aid/CPR as necessary and comfort the child.
- Another available staff member will call 911.
- Staff will make sure all other children are properly supervised, in no danger of harming themselves, and are not interfering with the care for the injured child.
- The Director or available staff member will call the injured child's parents/guardians and notify them of the incident and make arrangements to meet the parent at the medical facility their child is being taken to. If the squad is able to go to the facility indicated on the child's Permission to Transport form, we will ask the squad to do so; otherwise, the child will be taken to the closest and/or most appropriate medical facility.
- The Director or other staff member will accompany the child to the medical facility and remain there with the child until the parent arrives.
- An *Incident/Injury Report Form* (ODJFS #01299) detailing the incident will be filled out by a staff member who witnessed it, signed by the reporting staff member and the Director.
- A copy of the *Incident/Injury Report Form* will be available for the parent to review and sign within 24 hours of the incident.

The Center Director must contact the ODJFS Licensing Office within 24 hours in the event of any of the following:

- Death of a child
- Any serious incident, injury or illness that requires emergency medical treatment, professional consultation or transportation for emergency treatment.
- Any unusual or unexpected event which jeopardizes the safety of the children or staff.
- Written notification shall follow the 24-hour verbal notification and shall be recorded on ODJFS Form #01299. This form shall be faxed or mailed to the licensing office within 3 business days from the occurrence. This notification does not replace reporting to the public children services agency if there are concerns of child abuse or neglect.

ILLNESS AND COMMUNICABLE DISEASE

Stepping Stones staff members are trained to recognize symptoms of a potential communicable disease. A Communicable Disease Chart produced by the Ohio Department of Health is posted in each classroom, the lunchroom, and in the Learning Center office.

It is our policy to clean and disinfect toys, learning manipulatives, furniture, etc. on a regular basis to prevent the spread of any communicable diseases. Staff members are instructed in proper hand washing, appropriate handling of food, and sanitary methods of dealing with/cleaning up after potty accidents, etc. to greatly reduce the transmission of communicable disease.

Should a child become ill during the day, or exhibit signs of a communicable disease, he/she will be isolated from the rest of the children and made as comfortable as possible under the supervision of an available staff member. Parents will then be called to make arrangements to pick their child up as soon as possible.

Parents will be notified if their child has been exposed to a communicable disease at the Learning Center. Information regarding symptoms, contagious period, and treatment will be posted outside the Director's office and the classroom.

Your child's health is very important to us. Parents may bring their child to the Learning Center if he/she has the sniffles, a mild cold, or other mild discomfort that is not symptomatic of a communicable disease. Please notify the Learning Center immediately if your child has been exposed to any communicable disease so we may take action to alert other parents and keep our kids healthy.

In accordance with ODJFS licensing, a child will be immediately isolated and his/her parent called to come pick him/her up if any of the following symptoms are exhibited:

- Auxiliary (underarm) temperature of at least 100° F in combination with any other sign or symptom of illness. A Degree will not be added to the auxiliary temperature

- Diarrhea (three or more abnormally loose stools within a 24-hour period)
- Severe coughing, causing the child to become red or blue in the face or to make a whooping sound
- Difficult or rapid breathing
- Yellowish skin or eyes
- Redness of the eye, obvious discharge, matted eyelashes, burning or itching eyes
- Untreated infected skin patches, unusual spots or rashes
- Unusually dark urine and/or gray or white stool
- Stiff neck with an elevated temperature
- Evidence of untreated lice, scabies, or other parasitic infestations
- Sore throat or difficulty swallowing
- Vomiting more than one time or when accompanied by any other sign or symptom of illness

Parents should not bring their child to the Learning Center if the child exhibits any of the symptoms listed above in deference to the other children and staff at the Center.

READMISSION TO THE LEARNING CENTER AFTER AN ILLNESS

Following an illness, a child can be readmitted to the Learning Center if:

- Parents bring a written statement from the child's attending physician indicating the child is free from communicable disease,
- Vomiting and diarrhea have not occurred within the last 24 hours while on a normal diet,
- The child's temperature has been normal for 24 hours without medication,
- The child's rash or other condition has been medically treated, or
- After a specific contagious disease has been medically treated by a physician, the child has no symptoms and is under the appropriate treatment.

If a staff member exhibits signs of a communicable disease as listed above, that person shall be relieved of any duties that bring them into direct contact with the children and sent home until they meet the guidelines above for readmission to the Center.

SAFETY POLICIES

Every precaution is taken to ensure your child is in a comfortable and safe environment here at SSLC. All exterior doors to the Center remain locked 24/7; Visitors and parents are expected to enter and exit through the front office door. Most of the staff carry a cell phone on their person. All children will be supervised at all times, and children are released to authorized persons only. In accordance with ODJFS licensing, Stepping Stones Learning Center has established the following policies.

ARRIVAL AND DEPARTURE

Upon arrival, each child and parent will be greeted at the door by a staff member, and then will be directed to the appropriate classroom. It is essential for the safety of your child that his/her teacher be made aware of your child's presence or absence. Therefore, **parents or guardians are required to bring each child to his/her classroom, and a teacher must acknowledge the child's arrival before the parent/guardian may leave.** The teacher will sign each child in on the attendance roster upon arrival. **Parents/guardians must also inform a teacher before their child leaves the Center.** The teacher will then sign the child out on the attendance roster.

SUPERVISION OF SCHOOL-AGE CHILDREN

In accordance with the regulations established by ODJFS, school-age children (Kindergarten and up) may be permitted to run errands inside the building alone on occasion or go to the restroom without adult supervision. In these instances, the following qualifications shall be met:

- Children will always be within hearing distance of a staff member.
- The teacher or another staff member will check on the children every 5 minutes until they return to the group.
- The restroom is used exclusively by the Center's staff and students.

RELEASE OF CHILD TO AUTHORIZED PERSONS

Parents/guardians must notify the Learning Center in advance if someone other than themselves or those persons whom they have listed on their child's registration form as "**Individuals Authorized to Pick Up My Child**" will be picking their child up in one of the following ways:

- **IN WRITING**– Note must specify the pick-up person's name, date and approximate time of pick-up. This person must produce a photo ID to verify their identity at the time of pick-up.

- **BY PHONE**– Parent calls SSLC office to inform the Center of pick-up person’s name, date and approximate time of pick-up. This person must produce a photo ID to verify their identity at the time of pick-up.
- **IN PERSON**– Parent verbally informs the Center of pick-up person’s name, date and approximate time of pick-up. This person must produce a photo ID to verify their identity at the time of pick-up.

Persons listed on the child’s registration form as “**Individuals Authorized to Pick Up My Child**” must also produce photo ID to verify their identity at the time of pick-up.

ODJFS regulations prohibit anyone under the age of sixteen from picking-up a child, without the express written permission of the parent.

LATE PICK-UP

We understand that sometimes due to circumstances beyond one’s control, parents arrive after closing at 6:00 p.m. Please make every effort to arrive no less than five minutes before closing time. Please call the office, as soon as you see that you will arrive after closing. Parents may receive up to two “Friendly Reminders” concerning their late arrival. A late fee of \$1/minute will be assessed the third time and each time thereafter within the calendar year.

ABSENCES

We request that parents/guardians inform the SSLC by phone, in writing, or in person any time their child will be absent the Center due to illness, vacations, medical appointments, etc. SSLC will contact the parent/guardian to determine the whereabouts of a child who was scheduled to arrive at the Center from a location from which they would not be accompanied by the parent/guardian but has not arrived as scheduled .

GENERAL EMERGENCIES

In the event of a general emergency (defined as any threat to the safety of the children due to environmental situations, or threats of violence, natural disasters such as fire, tornado, flood, etc., or loss of power, heat or water), the Director will assess whether the children will be safer remaining in the building or if they need to be evacuated. Children will be evacuated a safe distance from the building or, in the event of inclement weather, be evacuated to the gymnasium or to the Worthington Seventh-day Adventist Church building if necessary. A General Emergency Action Plan is posted in each classroom and in the Learning Center office.

Should the general emergency condition be such that the children are not able to return to the building and/or resume their normal daily schedule, the Director will notify local radio and TV stations that the Learning Center will be closing (as specified in the “Center Closing Policy” listed in this handbook first, and then attempt to contact parents/guardians by phone if at all possible.

FIRE AND TORNADO DRILLS

Fire drills are conducted monthly, year-round in accordance with Ohio law. Tornado drills are conducted monthly from April through September. A Floor Plan/Evacuation Diagram is posted in each classroom and in the gymnasium, along with an Action Plan in the event of a fire or weather emergency.

PHYSICAL ENVIRONMENT

In order to ensure that the physical environment of the Learning Center is safe and healthy, Stepping Stones has established the following policy guidelines:

- No spray aerosols will be used when the children are present.
- The building is thoroughly cleaned after hours on a daily basis.
- Absolutely no smoking is permitted in the Learning Center, on the campus, nor anywhere within the visual range of the children, nor where the smoke may be smelled/inhaled by them, in accordance with ODJFS Rules.
- The physical plant of the Learning Center, furniture, play equipment and toys will be regularly inspected to make sure they are in safe, working order. Any items found to pose a safety hazard will be removed from the children's access and disposed of or properly repaired.
- Sleeping cots are sanitized on a regular basis (weekly, when soiled, or before the cot is assigned for use by another child). All other equipment is cleaned and disinfected regularly.
- All electrical outlets in areas where the children have access will be covered with childproof outlet plugs, and care will be taken to make sure cords do not pose a tripping or fire hazard.
- Safety rules will be clearly explained to the children and enforced at all times.

CHILD ABUSE RECOGNITION AND PREVENTION

Stepping Stones Learning Center Staff have been trained in the recognition of signs of child abuse and neglect, as well as in methods of preventing it. ***Ohio law requires any staff member to immediately notify Franklin County Children's Services if they suspect a child in their care is being abused or neglected.***

CENTER CLOSING POLICY

HOLIDAYS/IN-SERVICE DAYS

Stepping Stones Learning Center will be open Monday through Friday year-round EXCEPT for the following holidays: Labor Day, Thanksgiving, Christmas Day, New Year' s Day, Memorial Day, and Independence Day. In the event that a Christmas, New Year' s Day or Independence Day falls on a Saturday, the Center will be closed on the preceding Friday. If it falls on a Sunday, the Center will be closed on the following Monday.

In addition, the Center will be closed for two teacher in-service days (one day prior to the start of the school year session and one day prior to the start of the summer session).

These scheduled closings are announced in the SSLC newsletter and are posted throughout the Center, well in advance.

PHYSICAL PLANT DIFFICULTY/SEVERE WEATHER

In the event of a Level Three Snow Emergency or loss of power, heat or water, SSLC will close. The closing will be announced on the following television stations WSYX/WTTE (ABC Channel 6/FOX Channel 28), WBNS (CBS Channel 10), and WCMH (NBC Channel 4).

Child and Adult Care Food Program (CACFP)

SSLC participates in the CACFP, a federally funded program that reimburses institutions for meeting federal guidelines in the meals and snacks they provide the children.

USDA Nondiscrimination Statement

The U.S Department of Agriculture prohibits discrimination against its customers, employees, and applicants for employment on the bases of race, color, national origin, age, disability, sex, gender identity, religion, reprisal, and where applicable, political beliefs, marital status, familial or parental status, sexual orientation, or all or part of an individual's income is derived from any public assistance program, or protected genetic information in employment or in any program or activity conducted or funded by the Department. (Not all prohibited bases will apply to all programs and/or employment activities.)

If you wish to file a Civil Rights program complaint of discrimination, complete the [USDA Program Discrimination Complaint Form](#), found online at http://www.ascr.usda.gov/complaint_filing_cust.html, or at any USDA office, or call (866) 632-9992 to request the form. You may also write a letter containing all of the information requested in the form. Send your completed complaint form or letter to us by mail at U.S. Department of

Agriculture, Director, Office of Adjudication, 1400 Independence Avenue, S.W., Washington, D.C. 20250-9410, by fax (202) 690-7442 or email at program.intake@usda.gov.

Individuals who are deaf, hard of hearing or have speech disabilities may contact USDA through the Federal Relay Service at (800) 877-8339; or (800) 845-6136 (Spanish).

USDA is an equal opportunity provider and employer.

LUNCHES AND SNACKS

Stepping Stones Learning Center daily provides nutritionally balanced lunches and a morning and afternoon snack. A lunch/snack menu is posted in the Learning Center office for parents to review, and copies are placed in each student's classroom mailbox at the beginning of each month.

Children who are dropped off at the center between 7:00 and 7:45 a.m. may eat a breakfast provided by their parent/guardian in the kitchen area of the Center.

For more information about Child Nutrition Services or the CACFP guidelines, please visit their website at www.ode.state.oh.us/food_service, or call 614.466.2945.

Nutrition information specific to children 6 weeks to 12 months old is given in a separate handout, available with registration materials for parents of infants or upon request from the office.

TODDLER PARENTS: *Please do not bring bottles for your child to the Learning Center.*

Many parents transition their child from bottles to sippy cups around 12-18 months. It has been our experience that if one child has a bottle, others will desperately want one as well. To alleviate this potential conflict, we provide sippy cups for children to use during mealtimes and snack, so all the children can have the same.

Accommodations can be made for children with food allergies or other dietary restrictions. Parents should speak with a Director about their child's specific needs.

NONDISCRIMINATION STATEMENT

We believe cultural diversity enhances the learning experience, and we value the opportunities to learn from friends of different cultures and backgrounds. Therefore, SSLC does not discriminate on the basis of race, color, religion, sex, nationality, or country of origin with regard to enrollment of students or employment of staff.

All policies and practices detailed in this handbook are subject to change at the combined discretion the Director and Advisory Board, with appropriate notice given to the parents and staff.

