

Receipt of Parent Handbook

I, _____, have received the Big Hugs' Parent Handbook. I understand that it is very important to read this handbook as it has everything I need to know about the daycare.

Child's Name: _____

Parent's Name: _____

Parent's Signature _____ Date: _____

Parent/Student Handbook



Big Hugs Daycare & Preschool

619 Union Avenue

Middlesex, New Jersey 08846

(732) 764-0020 – Infant Building

(732) 469-1586 – Preschool Building

www.bighugspreschool.com

UPDATED 12/2020

Big Hugs reserves the right to change or amend any policy in the center at any time, by informing parents and staff in writing. This manual remains the property of Big Hugs and cannot be shared, reproduced, or distributed for any reason without the express written permission of Big Hugs.

Welcome to Big Hugs! 😊

Dear Parents:

If you are reading this handbook, it means that your child is enrolled at our center and we would like to welcome you into our Big Hugs Family.

This handbook covers many of the basic policies and procedures. Please remember that by enrolling your child at our center, you are agreeing to follow our rules. If you feel that something should be changed, please feel free to talk to me and we may be able to accommodate you in special circumstances.

Sincerely,

Betty Spencer
Owner/Director

Attendance

It is important that your child attends the center daily. Look at learning as a series of building blocks, the tower cannot be built without a strong foundation and missing blocks create an unsteady tower. Also, if your child will be absent, please make sure you contact the center that your child attends.

Children Absence Policy

If your child is absent for more than 2 consecutive days for any reason, then you need to contact their teacher and inform them the reason for the absence.

Make up Time

Normally missed days may not be made up. However, on occasion we may be able to do it. This service should be treated as a courtesy and not expected.

Big Hugs closes for a very limited number of holidays. A closing schedule will be provided to you yearly. If Big Hugs is closed either for a scheduled holiday or for circumstances beyond the center's control, your scheduled payment still must be made. Big Hugs does not credit parents for holidays or missed days.

Vacation Time

Big Hugs bills when a family goes on vacation. If you will be absent for more than 2 consecutive weeks you will be responsible to pay for the first two weeks of your absence. However, this only applies if we are notified in writing at least one month before your child's last day of attendance.

Schedule Change

If you would like to change your child's schedule, we require a minimum of 2 weeks written notice before the change. We do not guarantee that we can accommodate your wishes. We can only have a set amount of children in each room and we must meet staff to child ratio in each room. If this change takes us over these limits we may have to say no, but we will try our absolute best to accommodate you.

Late Pick Ups

Please remember that the center closes at 6:00 P.M. This means that everyone should be out the door by 6:00 P.M.! We do not schedule our staff past 6:00 P.M. If you pick up your child after 6:00 P.M., the following rates will apply: \$10.00 fee between 6:00-6:29 P.M. and \$20.00 fee between 6:30-7:00 P.M.

The first time you are late, as a courtesy, we will waive the late fee. Of course, emergencies are different and I recommend that you have a backup plan for picking up your child. Occasionally things happen that are beyond your control. Ongoing late pickups may result in your child being dismissed from the center.

Early Drop Off

If you need to drop off your child at the center earlier than your scheduled time, you must ask permission of Betty, Sabah or David in advance. The more notice you give, the better chance you have of being accommodated, but we can't always help you. We staff according to ratio and therefore we may not have enough staff scheduled to meet ratio. Also, although we are scheduled to open from 7:00 A.M. to 6:00 P.M., please remember that if your child is scheduled from 9:00 A.M. until 12:00 P.M., dropping them off before

9:00 A.M. or picking them up after 12:00 P.M. is not allowed until confirmed by the Director or Associate Director.

To clarify, if you pay for extended care, 7:00 A.M.-6:00 P.M. and regularly drop off at 7:30 A.M. and pick up at 5:30 P.M., and one day you need to drop off at 7:00 A.M. and pick up at 6:00 P.M., there is no additional charge. However, if you receive a discounted rate, there could be an additional charge. Charge or no charge, you always need to let us know to make sure we have enough staff scheduled to meet ratio. We make no guarantee of being able to accommodate your early arrival due to staffing ratios.

Also, please be aware that dropping your child off late does not entitle you to pick them up late. All children must be picked up at their regular time unless prior arrangements have been made with the center.

Big Hugs always reserves the right to refuse admittance to a child based on health or safety concerns, or in the event that we are unable to meet acceptable staff to child ratios due to illness or unforeseen circumstances.

Drop Off of Your Child

When you arrive at the center, you must sign your child in and remove their coat, which you will place in their cubby and bring them to their classroom. Any medications must be handed to your child's teacher and the medication form needs to be completed. If you have a child who uses a pack'n'play, you must make up their bed with their sheet on the first day of the week they attend.

Please note that any child under the age of 12 months CANNOT have a blanket in their pack 'n' play.

Also, please make sure your child's diaper is dry and their face is clean when they come into the center.

Children Arriving at the Center with Injuries or in a Neglectful Manner

In the State of New Jersey, it is mandated by law that any person who suspects child abuse or neglect must report it. If we feel that there is a possibility that your child has been exposed to abuse or neglect or if your child tells us that an adult injured them, we are mandated to report it. You, as a parent, can make a call to DYFUS as well if you see any form of abuse or neglect at our center.

Respect

At Big Hugs, we believe in respect. We respect everyone as a human being regardless of age, race or orientation. We expect that same respect from every person who walks through our door.

We try not to raise our voices (except on the rare occasions when it is required for either safety reasons or to be heard) and we expect the same from others. We teach the children that there are other ways to resolve disputes without arguments or raised voices.

We expect these values to be reinforced at home. We expect our staff to be treated with respect. If there is ever any kind of issue between a parent and one of our staff members, we expect it to be brought to the attention of management immediately.

We do not allow any form of verbal abuse or intimidation of our staff, for any reason. Likewise, arguments between parents will not be tolerated on our premises.

Sign In and Out Sheet

We cannot stress how important it is that you sign your child in and out of the center daily. First, it's the law and it is required by the Office of Licensing. Most importantly, if we have to evacuate the center for any reason, we take the sign in and out sheet with us. In the heat of an emergency, we need to ensure that we

have an accurate count of children. In order to do so, we need to cross check both the class lists and the school list.

Car Seats/Unattended Children

Please make sure your child is always riding in the car with a car seat, booster seat, seat belt, etc. Also, do not leave your child unattended in the car for any reason, even if you are just dropping another child off or forgot to pick something up from inside.

Payment

We accept your child's tuition payment in cash, check, or money order. You have the option to pay weekly, biweekly, or monthly. If you are paying weekly, payment is due at the beginning of the week for the week of. If you are paying biweekly, you must pay a week ahead. If you are paying monthly, payment is due on the first of every month. There will be a \$35 late fee if this payment schedule is not followed.

If you receive subsidized care from NJCK, WFNJ or an alternate program, you will be responsible to swipe your child in and out of the machine DAILY. If you do not swipe your child in and out, you will be responsible for those monies and you may lose your subsidy. If we are not paid by the subsidy agency for any reason, you will be responsible for paying those monies. Payments will be due immediately for you to continue bringing your child into the center.

Security deposits must be paid in cash prior to child's first day of attendance.

Discounts

Some children are eligible for discounts. Discounts are given at the discretion of center management and may be removed at any time without notice with or without reason being given. Discounts only apply to 5 day extended care and may be awarded on either a percentage or dollar basis. Percentage discounts are rounded up to the next dollar for ease of accounting. Partial months are charged at full rate.

Custody

We cannot refuse to give a child to a parent unless there is a Custody Order in effect. If you have a Custody Order in effect, we need a copy for our file. Also, it is your responsibility to follow the rules of the Custody Order, we have a responsibility to adhere to the order. However, if you show up to the center smelling of alcohol, or appear to be intoxicated, or otherwise impaired, your child will not be released to you.

Diversity

We live in one of the most diverse areas of a very diverse country. We are proud of our diversity and we love to learn about all the cultures we have here. We try to celebrate holidays from different cultures, whenever possible, and we try to send home information to the parents to explain the holiday. Please do not hesitate to bring your heritage into our center.

Home Language Policy

Big Hugs makes every effort to communicate with children and families whose primary language is not English. Parents are asked to share words in their home language with their child's teacher to help make their child feel more comfortable in the classroom. Teachers will attempt to label some of the classroom materials in the home language of the students. Parents are also encouraged to share books or other materials in their home language with the class. Non-English-speaking parents are encouraged to bring with them someone who can help interpret and translate questions, concerns, and documents.

Children whose first language is not English are encouraged to use home language, gestures, communication devices, sign language, and pictures to communicate when needed. We encourage you to tell us if your child's first language is not English.

Strengthening Families

Our center's main objective is to strengthen families which will allow us to facilitate friendships and mutual support, strengthen parenting, respond to family crisis, link families to services and opportunities, facilitate children's social and emotional development, to have a program self-assessment, and to value and support parents.

We encourage any parent or family member wanting to participate in this strengthening families initiative to speak to the Director so that you may become an integral part of our team. All newly enrolled families will be offered and encouraged to complete the Strengthening Families Survey. Another way to strengthen our families is through participation of a parent/family group that engages the enrolled families and supports their participation in the education of their children, which includes activities to promote multicultural learning. This group meets at least two times a year. If you are interested in becoming a part of this group, please advise the Director.

Family Supportive System

Our center collaborates with community partners to create a supportive system that responds appropriately to the needs of individual parents/families. If you or your family are in need of any support system, please schedule a meeting with the Director/Associate Director so that we may guide you in accordance to your need.

Our center accepts any state subsidy to accommodate single and low-income families. If you are in need of any financial assistance, please contact the Director/Associate Director so that we may direct you accordingly.

Lending Library

Our center provides materials that are made available to parents/families which includes materials of different resources which they may need. Our lending library is located in the entrance way of our infant center for your convenience. If at any time, you need additional resources for you or your family, please contact the Director or Associate Director so that we may guide you accordingly.

Emergency Plans

We have procedures in place in case of emergencies both inside and outside of the center. In the event that we are to be evacuated, the Police Department will send a school bus to evacuate our school. They have several safe places to which they can evacuate us, however, we are not privy to these locations in advance. Once we reach this location, we will call our voicemail and change our greeting to reflect our new location. We will then attempt to contact all of our parents. We cannot guarantee that we will personally reach everyone as in emergency situations the phone system is often inaccessible but we will try our absolute best.

We also have plans for Shelter in Place, which is also known as a lockdown. In the event that there is some kind of chemical leak, biological attack, a criminal on the loose, and so on and so forth, the Police Department may determine that it is unsafe for us to leave the center. We have worked with Emergency Management Personnel to develop a plan. This includes locking and covering all doors, windows, and points where possible contaminants could enter the facility. During this time no one may enter or leave the facility. We truly hope that we will never have to institute this policy.

We require copies of parent's driver's licenses to carry with us in our evacuation binder. This will aid the emergency personnel in allowing people to pick up their child. If you do not have a driver's license, please provide the center with another form of identification.

Emergency Closing

While we make every effort not to close the center during operating hours, occasionally circumstances beyond our control force us to do so. Sometimes, the Borough of Middlesex may recommend that we close or a State of Emergency may be declared for New Jersey. Also, we may close if conditions within the center, such as no electricity or water, etc., require our center to close. The decision to close is never taken lightly, we have to take into account not just the safety of everyone in the center, but the safety of traveling to and from the center.

Whenever possible, during an emergency closing, we will make the decision early and change the voicemail around 6:00 A.M., as well as send out an announcement on our Remind App. In the event that we must close during operating hours, we will change the voicemail to reflect the situation, if possible, and begin contacting the parents of children present at the center in order for them to pick up their children.

It is imperative that you pick up your child as soon as possible to ensure the safety of everyone.

Laundry

Please check your cubbies daily for soiled clothing and/or bibs. Please take them home immediately for laundering. The soiled clothing usually will be tied in a plastic bag located in your child's cubby.

At the end of your child's school week, on whatever day that may fall, it is important that you take home your child's crib sheet, blanket, sleeping bag and return them laundered when your child returns.

Occasionally napping children may have an accident. If this happens, we need to send their sleeping bags home that day. Please do not forget to return the clean sleeping bag when your child returns to school.

Borrowed Clothes

If for any reason we send your child home in clothes borrowed from the center, please wash them before you return them. Most importantly, please return them!

Potty Training

All potty-training children must provide velcro sided pull ups. We do not accept diapers for potty training. Also, parents need to be potty training their children at home. We do expect all children to be trained before they enter into the 3 years old class. However, we allow pull ups for naptime regardless of your child's age.

Remember, children who are potty training have accidents, we will bag the clothing and send it home to be washed. Please make sure your child always has extra clothes in their cubby.

Missing Items

Children are notorious for losing socks and shoes. Please enforce at home that they must keep their shoes and socks on in the center. We will always do our best to locate these items.

Sometimes clothes go missing or are accidentally taken home by someone else. If this happens, we will send out a note to all parents to return the missing items. Jewelry is easily lost and hard to find.

Please remember that occasionally a missing item will not turn up until the following day. If an item disappears or is damaged, Big Hugs is not responsible for reimbursing a parent for the item under any circumstances. We will try our best to find your missing items.

Toys

Please do not send your child to Big Hugs with any toys other than for Show and Tell. Show and Tell is only for children attending the Preschool. These toys should be placed in your child's cubby, or in the Show and Tell basket in their classroom. Most importantly, if you cannot bear to lose it, please do not send it.

Sippy Cups/Bottles

Once a child graduates out of the infant building, they should no longer bring a sippy cup, bottle or pacifier to school. If you need assistance in weaning your child from this, please let us know and we will assist you to the best of our ability. Learning to drink from a regular cup is an important developmental skill. We recommend that weaning be completed by the middle of summer prior to their official September entrance into the Preschool Building.

If your child does use sippy cups or bottles, you should bring 3 daily. Please clearly label each one with your child's name on it and have it filled with what your child will be drinking throughout the day. This includes water, juice, milk, etc. You are responsible to bring your child's sippy cups and bottles home to wash and sterilize daily.

Mealtimes

Breakfast is served only until 8:30 A.M. All children who wish to eat breakfast at the center must arrive before 8:30 A.M. Morning snack is served between 10:00 A.M.-10:30 A.M. depending on the class activities that day. Lunch is served between 11:30 A.M.-12:00 P.M. Afternoon snack is served between 2:30 P.M.-3:00 P.M.

Please make sure your child's belongings are labeled clearly with their name on it.

Cleanliness

While we do try to keep the children in the center clean, please be aware that they are children and they do get messy sometimes. This may be caused by food, arts and crafts, outside play, or any other dirt that they may find.

Please do not dress your child in an outfit that you never want to get dirty.

Please make sure that you take home all soiled clothing and replace it with clean clothing. We do try to stay on top of cleaning hands and faces. If at any time your child is not presentable when you pick them up, immediately notify Betty, Sabah or David.

Birthdays

We celebrate every child's birthday with their class. Parents are welcomed to bring cupcakes, cake, munchkins, etc. and to attend their child's birthday celebration with us!

If you would like to send in goody bags, we ask that you send one for every child in the class. The goody bags are placed in the cubbies to be sent home. Please make sure there are no nuts or choking hazards in them.

Hair Ties and Jewelry

Please remember that small children love to put things in their mouth. Small hair ties seldom stay attached for the entire day and they are a choking hazard. Please ensure that your child's hair ties are not a potential hazard for other children. Please do not send your child in wearing jewelry. If you choose to do so please be

aware that we are not responsible for damage to jewelry, damage caused by jewelry or jewelry that is lost or misplaced. Silly bands are not allowed in the center.

While we understand the cultural significance of waist chains and threads, please ensure that those worn by children still in diapers are kept hygienically clean, or we will have to remove them.

Chewing Gum/Candy

Please do not send your child into the center with gum or candy. It is a choking hazard and it doesn't always stay in your child's mouth.

Accident Reports

Any child who is injured or experiences an accident at the center should have a completed accident and injury report. This report will be kept in your child's classroom and must be read and signed by a parent or authorized pick up person. According to Big Hugs Policy, a copy may be furnished to you upon request.

In the event that you notice an injury to your child which has not been brought to your attention, please inform management as soon as possible, so that we may launch an investigation.

Please do not request the name of the child who injured your child. The same applies if you receive a report that your child injured another child, don't ask us the name of that child, we're not allowed to tell you. If your child tells you the name of the other child, that's between you and them. We are unable to discuss that child's behavior or history with you. The State does not permit us to tell you.

Unfortunately, the other issue that we run into is biting. As awful as it may seem, biting is normal behavior. When a child is known to be going through the biting stage, rest assured that we do monitor the situation. Staff will shadow the child biting in an effort to stop incidents before they begin. If a child is still biting once they become verbal and are able to communicate effectively, we will deal with the situation differently.

In conjunction with the DYFS policy on biting, Big Hugs' protocol for dealing with biting is as follows:

Initiatives to be considered BEFORE A BITING INCIDENT OCCURS:

- Staff discusses biting experiences, identifies the non-verbal signs or situations where biting seems most likely.
- Staff "brainstorms" preventive steps to be taken to avoid or prevent the incidence of biting.
- Materials are developed for parents of biter and victim.
- Distribute the center's biting policy to parents at time of enrollment.
- Provide a written incident report form.
- Organize observation/recording procedures.
- Assist other children in relation to biting threat.
- Staff role-plays responses to emotional parent concerned with biting.
- Conduct parent meeting on the topic of biting, when needed.

Actions taken IMMEDIATELY AFTER the biting incident:

- Separate those involved.
- Move biter into an alternative activity.
- Examine and assist victim.
- Handle individually, not with group.
-

FOLLOW-UP Actions:

- Complete incident form.
- Take initiative in informing parent of incident.
- Sympathy for the feelings of victim and parent should not include apology for an incident over which you have little control.
 - Biting happens and is not necessarily the fault of the center.
- After all else has failed, consider with parent a final alternative of removing child from environment for a period of time.
- Conduct an evaluation of the event with staff. If needed, review biting procedures and policies and determine if they need to be modified.

In addition, we utilize the DYFS policy as we feel appropriate. We also utilize our hands-on experience. If you would like a detailed explanation of how we handle specific biting incidents, please speak to Betty, Sabah or Betty.

Health and Sickness Policy

If a child exhibits any of the following symptoms, they cannot attend the center. If such symptoms occur at the center, the child will be removed from the group and you will be called to take them home. When notified, you must collect your child within one hour. The child may not return until they have been symptom free for 24 hours, or has a doctor's note stating that they no longer pose a health risk to themselves or others.

We reserve the right to request a doctor's note for illnesses not listed below and to exclude a child who has presented a doctor's note but is still exhibiting symptoms of the disease, as per the Health Department.

Children must stay home for a minimum of 24 hrs. after they become symptom free if they have:

- Severe pain or discomfort
- Lice
- Acute diarrhea
- Acute vomiting
- Temperature of 101.5 or higher
- Severe coughing
- Yellow or red eyes with discharge
- Jaundiced skin or infected or untreated skin patches
- Difficult or rapid breathing
- Skin lesions that are weeping or bleeding
- Skin rashes lasting longer than 24 hours
- Swollen joints
- Visibly enlarged lymph nodes, stiff neck
- Blood in urine.

A child who contracts any of the following excludable communicable diseases may not return to the center without a physician's note stating that the child presents no risk to themselves or others:

Chicken Pox, German Measles, Hemophilus Influenza, Measles, Mumps, Strep Throat, Tuberculosis, Whooping Cough, Giardia Lamblia, Hepatitis A, Salmonella, Shigella, Impetigo, Lice, Scabies, Lethargy, Shingles.

While we've found that the big diseases, such as Chicken Pox, Mumps, etc., only appear occasionally, and rarely spread, the State remains firm on its rules for exclusion. We also require that you notify the center if your child has had prolonged contact with someone infected with one of the Excludable Communicable Diseases so we can be on the lookout for signs and symptoms.

If your child is taking antibiotics, eye drops or prescription medication for any potentially contagious illness, they must stay home from the center for 24 hours from the time of the first dose.

If your child is diagnosed with coxsackie, we require that you notify the center immediately, it is no longer considered an excludable disease by the state, and as long as their doctor feels that they can attend our center and they do not require additional care, they may remain at the center.

Coxsackie is contagious for several weeks after diagnosis, so courtesy would dictate that we inform families who have come in contact with an infected child. While some parents would like us to exclude the child for the duration, the state has ruled that a center can no longer exclude a child except if they have fever, require additional care, etc.

The only way to avoid having immunizations or physicals is to provide a signed letter that explains that the examination, immunization or medical treatment conflicts with the child's exercise of bona fide religious tenets or practices. If there is a vaccine preventable disease outbreak or threatened outbreak, children with immunization exemptions will be excluded from the center.

Flu shots are now required every year for every child in daycare over the age of 6 months and must be administered between 9/1 and 12/31 every year, it's a state rule. The only exceptions are religious or medical exemption. If your child turns 6 months on 12/31, you have to have them vaccinated, we are required to exclude children who do not have their vaccinations.

For additional medication rules, please see our brochure.

Universal Health Record

Annually, a doctor must complete your child's Universal Health Record.

Allergies/Special Needs

Due to the severity of peanut/tree nut allergies we are a nut free zone.

Food allergies vary in severity, but regardless of the level, we must be informed prior to your child starting Big Hugs of any and all food allergies.

All children who have allergies must provide a Food Allergy Action Plan which has to be completed by their doctor. It must be filled out completely and signed by both the parent and the doctor. If your child's doctor prescribes any medication, prescription or non-prescription, to use in the event of an allergic reaction, you must keep it at the center and replace it before it expires. It is the parent/guardian's responsibility to keep track of expiration dates. We do not keep medications on premises unless they are provided by the child's parent.

Any medication required for the allergy must be left at the center in accordance with our Medication Policy. Epi-pens and rescue inhalers are kept out of reach of the children in that child's classroom. If you provide 2, we will place the extra one in the medication box in the office. While we hope to never have to use them, epi-pens must remain at the center and they cannot go back and forth, in case you forget to bring them one day.

If your child has Asthma, we must have a completed Asthma Treatment Plan on file. It must be completed and signed by their doctor. All medications required on this form must be provided to the center, and again, it is the parent/guardian's responsibility to keep track of expiration dates

If your child has any special needs, disabilities or delays, special diets, allergies, or specialized feeding issues, please let us know so that we can accommodate them to the best of our abilities.

Our staff has been trained in special diets and allergies and specialized feeding issues.

Changes at Home

If you are experiencing any dramatic changes at home, please let us know so that we can monitor any changes with your child.

A change may be, a new person moving into the home or someone moving out, a divorce or separation, a parent leaving for vacation, business or jail, an illness or death, or of course a pregnancy or adoption.

Please be aware that any changes which either affect, or may affect your child's behavior, will be discussed with appropriate staff members only.

Updates

If you change anything, especially your phone numbers, address or job, let us know immediately. The center must be able to contact you in case of an emergency.

Please write down any changes and put them in the tuition box and we will update our system accordingly.

Personal Supplies

Personal supplies must be provided to the center, on or before, your child's first day. In the event that you leave the center (with the exception of vacation), you must remove all items within one week of your child's last day. Failure to do so will constitute abandonment of these items and we will destroy or distribute them as we choose.

Year-Round Supplies

INFANT/TODDLER ROOM:

- Extra clothes (2-3 outfits)
- Diapers
- 4 packs of wipes for each month
- Crib sheets/Sleeping bag
- 3 already made bottles for infants
- 3 already filled sippy cups for toddlers (water, milk, juice, etc.)
- Breakfast if eating before 9:00 A.M.
- Lunch
- 2 snacks
- Sunscreen/bug spray if weather permitting

PRESCHOOL:

- Extra clothes (2-3 outfits)
- Pull-ups, if putty training
- Wipes for the month
 - 3 packs for the 2-year-old class
 - 1 pack for the 3-year-old class

- 1 pack for the 4-year-old class.
- Sleeping bag
- Breakfast, if arriving before 8:30 A.M.
- Lunch
- 2 snacks
- 3 drinks for the day (water, milk, juice, etc.)
- Sunscreen/bug spray if weather permitting

Sleeping bags, sheets, or blankets must be taken home on the last day of your child's school week and returned on the first day of their next week. All sleeping bags must be clearly labeled with your child's name. We frequently have similar or even identical sleeping bags here so we want to make sure every child sleep on his/her own sleeping bag.

If your child requires specialized wipes, please ensure they come with a container that is clearly labeled with your child's name. In the event that your child uses more than the regular allotted amount, you will be responsible for providing more. You still must bring in the required amount on the first day of each month.

Summer Program

Our school year runs from right after Labor Day in September to the day before graduation in June, the exact dates vary each year according to both the calendar and the date we are able to schedule graduation (it depends on the availability of our venue). Between Graduation and Labor Day, we have a summer program. The summer program has a play-based curriculum. We have several themed weeks, lots of crafts, projects, trips and special events. We spend a lot of time outside with water play in the morning and dry play in the afternoon.

Bathing Suit and Towel

We do a lot of water play in the summer time. Please make sure your child has a bathing suit and towel. Your child will also need sunblock spray and bug spray. If you do not bring your child's own sunblock spray and bug spray then your child will go outside without it.

Sandals or water shoes for outside play only (optional).

If you require earplugs, goggles etc., it is your responsibility to bring them in and fill out a memo form so that we may advise every staff member.

Summer is about having fun and it is not fair for every child not to be included. Please make sure you bring your child's belongings so they are able to participate!

Separation Anxiety

Often children cry while being dropped off at the center. Unfortunately, this is normal. After you leave your child, you can feel free to contact us anytime to check on your child.

It is natural for children who have been in daycare for a long time to suddenly begin to cry again. If you are concerned, ask us, we'll let you know if anything unusual is going on with your child.

Tips for First Timers

From our experience we have found that the more time a child is here, the faster they adapt. If a child is crying, as much as it breaks your heart, it is better to give them a hug and a kiss, tell them you'll be back to pick them up later and leave. The longer you stay, the harder it is for the child. Call us 15 minutes later, and every fifteen minutes thereafter if you feel the need, to find out how your child is doing.

Occasionally we have people who wish to stay with their child all day. While this is fine and entirely at your discretion, please be aware that you are creating a false sense of security and that when you leave, you are forcing the child to start over again. Children who have their parent or a guardian, such as a grandparent, stay with them each day often have a harder time adjusting. While we do not say no to this process, we would like you to be informed that it usually serves to slow down the adjustment period.

If you enroll your child as a part-time student and they are still crying beyond drop off after 2 weeks of attendance, we will recommend that you enroll your child for 5 days per week for 2 weeks. This will speed up the adjustment period and make it easier for your child. Once they stop crying consistently you can drop back down to your part-time schedule.

Special Needs Children

We accept children with special needs at Big Hugs. We believe that in this world, everyone is different, and that from an early age all children need to understand and accept this. Children with disabilities benefit from being with children who have different abilities than them. Unfortunately, we do not have staff that specialize in disabilities, but we are open to learning and we have space to allow therapists to come in and work with the children. If your child requires more specialized care, we will still accept them and we will make reasonable accommodations. Please inform the center if your child has or develops any special needs.

Occasionally, we will recognize that a child may have special needs and while we are not a doctor and cannot diagnose specific conditions, if we recommend that you have your child evaluated, we have good reason. Nobody wants their child to have a disability or a special need, but we have seen that children who receive intervention early enough benefit greatly.

Children with Possible Delays

If at any time we feel that your child has a developmental disability or delay, our center will immediately notify you and provide you with resources and support that will assist your child's physical, cognitive, and social/emotional development. If at any time you feel that your child, under the age of 3, has a developmental disability or delay in any manner, please feel free to visit www.nj.gov or call 1-888-653-4463. If your child is over 3 years old, you must contact your local school district.

ASQ Standards

Big Hugs utilizes the Ages and Stages Questionnaires to evaluate your child's developmental growth and social and emotional growth. If at any time we feel that your child is not meeting these ASQ standards, we will notify you immediately so that we can work together with you to get your child any type of services that may be offered to them.

Evaluations

We regularly evaluate your child to make sure that they are on target. We also perform three yearly formalized evaluations on your child. We appreciate parents' participation in every aspect of their child's milestones; if at anytime you feel that your child may be delayed, please speak to Betty directly so that she may provide you with information for further services.

If at any time your child may need any additional services, you may also refer to <https://www.cdc.gov/ncbddd/actearly/parents/states.html>.

Strengthening Families

Big Hugs is a part of Strengthening Families New Jersey which is a nationwide initiative.

The New Jersey Strengthening Families, a protective factors framework, is an approach for preventing child abuse and neglect by strengthening families through early care and education. The fundamental principle is that certain protective factors contribute towards family resilience and strength. Child care providers play an important role in building these protective factors among the families they serve. By using these strategies, centers can help families build these protective factors that have proven to be effective in preventing child abuse and neglect. We will provide you with a Protective Factors Survey; we would appreciate it you would fill it out. This survey is anonymous and will be used solely to support our families. If you require additional information please visit www.strengtheningfamilies.net.

Open House

We hold open houses throughout the course of the year. Sometimes we often host them as parties as a way to encourage participation. Halloween, Thanksgiving, The December Holiday Party and The Easter Bunny Visit are the ones where we welcome parent attendance and participation. You are also welcome to stop by the center at any time during operating hours.

Photos/Website

All children enrolled in the center will be photographed at some point either by the center or during parties, by their parents and/or guests of the center. Occasionally the media or our photographer will stop by to take additional photos. We try to display as many of the photographs on our website as we can, www.bighugspreschool.com. By enrolling your child in our center, you agree to have not only your child, but also yourself and your agents photographed.

We also have professional photographs taken twice a year.

Suggestions

If you have a suggestion regarding something that you feel would improve the center, please put it in writing and drop it in the payment box. If we feel that your suggestion may be beneficial to the center, we will utilize it. Unfortunately, not all suggestions from parents are feasible. If we do not put yours into practice, please ask a member of management for the reason.

Donations

We accept donations of clothing, toys, infant equipment, decorations, etc. If we cannot use it in the center, we will find someone who can use the items.

Fundraisers

We try to keep our tuition as low as possible. We hold several fundraisers throughout the course of the year to reduce or avoid tuition increases. We host a single major fundraiser every year, such as a candy sale, and participation is mandatory.

If you choose not to participate, you will be charged an opt-out fee. We encourage you to participate in all of our fundraisers!

Outside Play Policy

Weather permitting, we will take the children outside. This is a state requirement and it has been proven that fresh air is good for children. They need to be in the fresh air to promote growth. If your child is too sick to be allowed to play outside, they cannot be in school.

If your child suffers from seasonal allergies, we are no longer able to keep your child inside, this is a state rule. Please reinforce with your child the necessity of keeping their coat on and fastened during cooler weather.

It is the policy of **Big Hugs** that all children who are well enough to be in attendance are well enough to participate in outdoor activities. Daily outdoor activities are planned for all children when weather permits. Children will not be taken outdoors in severe and threatening weather.

NJ Department of Children and Families requires a daily amount of outdoor time for all children with the exception of infants. If children are dressed appropriately, weather conditions should not pose an illness threat. **Big Hugs** believes that the tasks of dressing and undressing are vital skills all children should be able to master. While children are in attendance at **Big Hugs**, it is expected that they participate in all aspects of the activities planned with reasonable comfort and this will include outdoor play. During the winter months, time outside could be for up to 45 minutes at a time.

Note: Children cannot be excused from the outdoor portion of Big Hugs' program.

Parents can help make the outdoor experience satisfying for their child and are expected to provide the following:

- Warm coat, hat, mittens, snow pants, shoes and boots.
- An **extra** pair of mittens, socks, pants, and shirt should be kept in their back pack to be used in case of wet or soiled clothing.
- Label all your child's clothing with a permanent marker.
- Help your child know daily where their belongings are at drop off.

The Parking Lot

While we own our interior space and the playground, the parking lot and sidewalks, etc. are owned and operated by the condo association. If you see any problems, issues, or experience an accident or damage to yourself or your vehicle, please bring it to our attention and we will give you the condo association information.

Also, when dropping your child off, please make sure that you are parked in a parking spot and not parked in front of the entrance.

Trips and On-Site Presentations

All trips and presentations are announced in advance. Advance registration is required, along with payment in full. Payment must be in the form of cash only. We must receive a completed trip form with attached payment to register for any trip.

All children who attend off premises trips are required to wear a Big Hugs Shirt. Shirts must be ordered in advance at a cost of \$10.00 each. If your child arrives without the shirt on a day of the trip and we have no shirts available, your child will not be able to attend the trip and your money will not be refunded.

In the event that Big Hugs cancels a trip due to lack of sign up, all monies paid towards that trip will be refunded. In the event that a parent cancels from a trip or does not show up for the trip, unless that place is sold to another person, there will be no refunds.

All children under 3 years of age require a chaperone on a trip. Parents, grandparents and other family members are also welcome to come with children over the age of 3. It's often a wonderful experience for the child to have someone they love participate. Some trips require a chaperone regardless of age.

Whenever we have a trip, the center does stay open for the children who are not participating. Sometimes they may be moved to another class if their teacher is on the trip.

When we have on-site presentations or activities, no chaperone is required, regardless of age.

Age Groups

Our classes are divided into separate age groups, from babies to toddler, up until the 4-year-old class. The cutoff date is currently October 1st, so a child must meet the minimum age for the class by October 1st to be eligible.

Recalls

We periodically check the recall list to ensure that toys and equipment in the center have not been recalled. In the event that an item has been recalled, we either remove it completely, or remove it until the repair kit is received and installed. We recommend that you also check the recall list to ensure items you have at home are safe for your child. Recalls may be located at <https://www.parents.com/product-recalls/>.

Plastic Bags

We always use plastic grocery bags. Please bring in as many as you can spare. We appreciate it!

Transition to Kindergarten Folder

It is the primary teacher's responsibility to create and maintain a folder for your child in their classroom. This folder will include your child's name, assessments, and work samples. Every year, this folder will follow your child into their new classroom and will be released to you upon your child's graduation into Kindergarten.

End of the Year Show and Graduation Ceremony

We hold an End of the Year Show and Graduation Ceremony each year in June. The children practice their songs and dances for many months and it is important to them that their family is present.

We hold the ceremony on the weekend, so that you don't have to take off from work. All children, 2, 2½, 3- and 4-year-old classes, participate in the show. The 4-year-old class graduates at the end of the proceedings. All the children and the staff work very hard to create this show, please make every effort to attend.

Taxes

During January, we try to provide a statement showing all monies paid to Big Hugs during the previous year. To receive this statement, your account must be in good standing. If your child is leaving for any reason, prior to the end of the year, a statement will be placed in your cubby as long as your account is in good standing. We do not mail out statements. If you leave with your account in arrears, we will not provide you with any forms, tax or otherwise, until the account is paid in full.

Giving Notice

If you decide to take your child out from Big Hugs, you must give a 2-week notice in written form and you will be required to pay for those last two weeks.

Additional Information

Importance of Positive Relationships between Caregivers and Families

"From the family, young children gain a feeling of belonging, a sense of personal, history, the joy of shared meaning and the security of knowing who they are and where they come from. In the larger community,

significant adults give children both overt and subtle messages that shape their view of themselves and their families.” (Sanchez, 2010)

Parents are their children’s first teachers, and they continue to be a key source of learning even as children move into child care and other educational settings.

Research has shown that children whose parents and caregivers cooperate, have shared expectations for children, and utilize agreed upon discipline techniques across settings may have stronger social and language skills, and may exhibit fewer behavioral problems. (Wise & Sanson, 2003) Given the potential benefits of caregiver-parent cooperation, family involvement is an important part of caring for young children. There are lots of other benefits to children, families, and caregivers when caregivers and families establish positive relationships.

1. Positive relationships between caregivers and families provide opportunities for meaningful learning experiences for children. Many of a child’s learning experiences will take place while they are in the care of their family. Families can be a valuable source of information about the meaningful experiences a child has had outside the classroom, which caregivers can use to tailor curriculum, activities, and the classroom atmosphere to best meet the needs of individual children. Having good relationships with families assists us in building good relationships with their children.
2. Positive relationships between caregivers and families allow caregivers to establish a better understanding of a child’s individual needs. Families provide important information about their children. They are experts on their own children and can provide information on children's preferences, learning styles, health, strengths, and much more. The family is the most important resource in helping us understand an individual child.
3. Positive relationships between caregivers and families allow caregivers to implement developmentally and culturally appropriate curriculum. Family involvement creates connections between the home and school environments. Understanding families’ cultural and individual expectations, desires, and aspirations for their children allows caregivers to create continuity between what a child experiences at home and in childcare. This allows children to more comfortably transition between settings because they always know what to expect. Incorporating elements of children’s family and cultural lifestyles into the classroom also gives children the implicit message that they are respected, valued and loved.
4. Positive relationships between caregivers and families provide a solid foundation for language and literacy development. It is important for caregivers to understand that families have a powerful influence on children’s attitudes towards language and literacy. By cooperating with families to provide language rich experiences for young children, you can have a lifelong impact on children’s literacy skills. Together caregivers and parents can build a strong foundation for the child’s academic future.

Policy on Methods of Parental Notification/Communication

Big Hugs uses an app called Remind to communicate with parents individually. Through this app, you will receive announcements such as closure dates, trips, reminders, etc. We will also use this app to notify you about your child individually. This app is for communication purposes only. We also communicate with parents via newsletters, texts, telephone, and Class DoJo.

Workshops

Big Hugs will offer several workshops throughout the year in health and safety including preventive health care, mental/behavioral health issues, nutrition and obesity, medication administration policies and procedures, oral health practices, and communicable disease prevention. We will also have workshops on topics such as early literacy, adult/family literacy, positive parent-child interactions, cultural awareness, developmental issues, and/or other topics that address the identified needs and interests of enrolled

parents/families. We will also have open houses where we will have different guests come in, such as the local dentist, nutritionist, etc. to talk to the parents and children. We will provide information accordingly.

Advisory Boards

Our center encourages parents to participate on local or regional community advisory boards. Please advise us if you are already a member on a board and what position you may hold. If you are interested in sitting on a board, you can contact your local township or go to www.middlesexcountynj.gov for Middlesex County or <https://www.co.somerset.nj.us/government/human-services/operations-planning/advisory-councils> for Somerset County. If you need any other additional information or you do not live in Middlesex or Somerset County, please see the director so that we may direct you to the website for your county.

Parent Surveys

In an effort to continue to offer you, our families, the best childcare possible, we ask you to take a minute to read over and complete a parent survey twice a year. The questions are just a starting point. Feel free to add any other information that you feel we need to know to maintain and better the quality of care you are receiving, or improve it. All suggestions or comments are appreciated. Thank you for your time in advance.

Parent Meeting

The Director and Primary Teacher for your child holds midyear progression parent meetings. During this meeting, they will go over your child's strengths and weaknesses and different things your child needs to work on. This will also be an opportunity for you to ask questions about things in the classroom, where your child is at, etc. We provide two parent meetings yearly, and more than that if needed.

Home Visits

We are offering home visits to all enrolled families. The expectations of these visits will be to support parents and child development. Please advise the Director or Associate Director if this is something you may be interested in.

Policy on the Use of Technology and Social Media

Big Hugs will not use technology and social media for any child under the age of 2. Technology and social media will only be used for children over 2 years old in a learning environment. Television will not be used in passive viewing.

Screen time includes the use of television, videos, computers, and video games during care.

Big Hugs understands TV and other screen time can get in the way of playtime, physical activity, and interactions with others, which all contribute to learning and healthy physical/social development.

Therefore, we will restrict screen time by adhering to the following guidelines:

- We allow a maximum of 30 minutes per day of educational, age appropriate screen time.
- We allow zero screen time for children under the age of two.
- We do not allow television or movies to be left on as background noise.
- We do not have television or movies playing during mealtimes.
- We do not offer screen time as a reward.

5 Important Reasons to Vaccinate Your Child

Immunizations can save your child's life

Because of advances in medical science, your child can be protected against more diseases than ever before.

Some diseases that once injured or killed thousands of children, have been eliminated completely and others are close to extinction— primarily due to safe and effective vaccines. One example of the great impact that vaccines can have is the elimination of polio in the United States. Polio was once America’s most-feared disease, causing death and paralysis across the country, but today, thanks to vaccination, there are no reports of polio in the United States.

Vaccination is very safe and effective

Vaccines are only given to children after a long and careful review by scientists, doctors, and healthcare professionals. Vaccines will involve some discomfort and may cause pain, redness, or tenderness at the site of injection but this is minimal compared to the pain, discomfort, and trauma of the diseases these vaccines prevent. Serious side effects following vaccination, such as allergic reaction, are very rare. The disease-prevention benefits of getting vaccines are much greater than the possible side effects for almost all children.

Immunization protect others you care about

Children in the U.S. still get vaccine-preventable diseases. In fact, we have seen resurgences of measles and whooping cough (pertussis) over the past few years. From January through July 2013, more than 11,000 cases of whooping cough were reported, with cases in every state. Over the past few years, there were 41,000 cases reported, the most since 1955. There were also 18 deaths reported in 2012, most of which were among babies younger than 3 months old. To help keep them safe, it is important that you and your children who are able to get vaccinated are fully immunized. This not only protects your family, but also helps prevent the spread of these diseases to your friends and love ones.

Immunization can save your family time and money

A child with a vaccine-preventable disease can be denied attendance at schools or daycare facilities. Some vaccine-preventable diseases can result in prolonged disabilities and can take a financial toll because of lost time at work, medical bills, or long-term disability care. In contrast, getting vaccinated against these diseases is a good investment and usually covered by insurance. The Vaccines for Children program is a federally funded program that provides vaccines at no cost to children from low-income families.

Immunization protects future generations

Vaccines have reduced and, in some cases, eliminated many diseases that killed or severely disabled people just a few generations ago. For example, smallpox vaccination eradicated that disease worldwide. Your children don't have to get smallpox shots anymore because the disease no longer exists. By vaccinating children against rubella (German measles), the risk that pregnant women will pass this virus on to their fetus or newborn has dramatically decreased, and birth defects associated with that virus no longer are seen in the United States. If we continue vaccinating now, and vaccinating completely, parents in the future may be able to trust that some diseases of today will no longer be around to harm their children in the future.

FOOD SAFETY POLICY

Reason this policy is important:

For children, it only takes a small amount of toxins in contaminated food to cause serious illness. It is important to practice safe food handling, food preparation, and food storage to prevent the contamination of food served to children and staff.

Procedure and Practices, including responsible person(s):

Staff has received training in safe food handling that is consistent with state or local food service rules and regulations.

Food Preparation areas and staff:

- No one with signs of illness or that has been diagnosed with an illness will be responsible for handling or preparing food.
- Those who prepare food should not change diapers and vice versa,

whenever possible. When this is not possible, careful hand washing procedures will be followed.

- Hand washing sinks will be separate from food preparation sinks.
- Food preparation counters will be made of a solid surface, in good repair, and kept clean and sanitized.

Food Storage:

- Food will be stored according to the *Caring for Our Children* guidelines: [Food Storage Chart](#).
- Refrigerators will be maintained at 40° F or lower and freezers will be maintained below 0° F. A thermometer will be in the refrigerator/freezer at all times. A staff member will log daily temperatures in both refrigerator and freezer to be sure the right temperature is being maintained.
- Foods not requiring refrigeration will be stored 6 inches off the floor in easily cleanable, dry storerooms.
- Dry, bulk foods not stored in original packaging will be stored in a sealed container that is labeled and dated. (Cardboard boxes should not be used. They attract pests.)

Sanitation:

- Cleaning products will be stored in original containers and away from food.
- Cutting boards will be made of a solid, nonporous surface. Wood will not be used and those with cuts or crevices.
- All washable bibs and washcloths will be laundered after each use.

Vending:

- Food provided by a central kitchen or vendor from off-site locations will be obtained by approved sources and inspected by the local health authority.
- Settings will have provisions for holding hot food at 135° F and cold food 40° F or below until served.
- Utensils used to serve food will be properly cleaned and sanitized.

Big Hugs' Breastfeeding Policy

Big Hugs is committed to providing a breastfeeding friendly environment for our enrolled children and staff.

Big Hugs' subscribes to the following policy:

Breastfeeding mothers shall be provided a place to breastfeed or express their milk.

Breastfeeding mothers, including employees, shall be provided a private and sanitary place (other than a bathroom) to breastfeed their babies or express milk. This area has an electric outlet, comfortable chair, and nearby access to running water. Mothers are also welcome to breastfeed in front of others if they wish.

A refrigerator will be made available for storage of expressed breast milk.

Breastfeeding mothers and employees may store their expressed breast milk in the center refrigerator. Mothers should provide their own containers, clearly labeled with their child's name and the date.

Sensitivity will be shown to breastfeeding mothers and their babies.

The center is committed to providing ongoing support to breastfeeding mothers, including providing an opportunity to breastfeed their baby in the morning and evening, and holding off giving a bottle, if possible, when mom is due to arrive. Infant formula and solid foods will not be provided unless requested by the mother. Babies will be held closely when feeding.

Staff shall be trained in handling breast milk.

All center staff will be trained in the proper storage and handling of breast milk, as well as ways to support breastfeeding mothers. The center will follow human milk storage guidelines from the American Academy of Pediatrics and Centers for Disease Control and Prevention to avoid waste and prevent food borne illness.

Breastfeeding employees shall be provided flexible breaks to accommodate breastfeeding or milk expression.

Breastfeeding employees shall be provided a flexible schedule for breastfeeding or pumping to provide breast milk for their children. The time allowed would not exceed the normal time allowed to other employees for lunch and breaks. For time above and beyond normal lunch and breaks, sick/annual leave may be used, or the employee can come in earlier or leave later to make up the time.

Breast Milk Precautions

Breast milk is a body fluid and should be treated as such. You should clean up breast milk spills like any other body fluid:

- Wipe up the spill wearing disposable gloves.
- Dispose of as directed. See the Procedures for Standard Precautions — Bloodborne Pathogens.
- Clean the area with a bleach and water solution.

A child should never drink another child's breast milk. If this happens, the incident should be taken seriously. Although the risk of any illness being transmitted is very small, should it occur, proceed as follows:

- Inform the parent/guardian of the child given the wrong bottle that his or her child drank another child's breast milk.
- Ask the parent/guardian to notify his or her child's physician immediately.
- Inform the mother whose milk was consumed about the switch and ask her:
 - How the milk was handled before it was brought to the Center
 - If she would be willing to share any pertinent medical information or be tested for any communicable illnesses
 - If she would be willing to allow a confidential call between her doctor and the other child's pediatrician

Storing Bottles of Breast Milk

1. Verify that bottles of breast milk are properly labeled. As soon as bottles of breast milk are brought to the Center, verify that each bottle is labeled with easy-to-read labels, showing
 - The infant's full name
 - The date collected
 - An expiration date
2. Refrigerate or freeze bottles of breast milk immediately, as appropriate.
 - If the breast milk will be used within 24 hours, store the bottles immediately upon receipt in a clean, tightly sealed, labeled, and dated container that is placed in the refrigerator (in the child's labeled storage bin).
 - Freeze breast milk if it will not be used within 24 hours, in two to four-ounce servings. Place the bottles in the rear of the freezer, not near the door.

Note: Milk may be frozen for one month in an average freezer. Discard frozen breast milk after one month. Although some literature suggests that breast milk may be frozen for a longer period, given the types of freezers in our centers and the frequency with which they are opened, it is recommended that it be kept frozen no longer than one month.

Note: Remove all unused bottles (not previously frozen) of breast milk from the refrigerator after 48 hours and discard the contents.

Warming Bottles of Formula, Milk, and Breast Milk

Note: Regardless of whether you are preparing a bottle of formula, milk, or breast milk, verify that you have the correct bottle for the child. Double-check the bottle to ensure that it is clearly labeled with the full name of the child for whom it is intended.

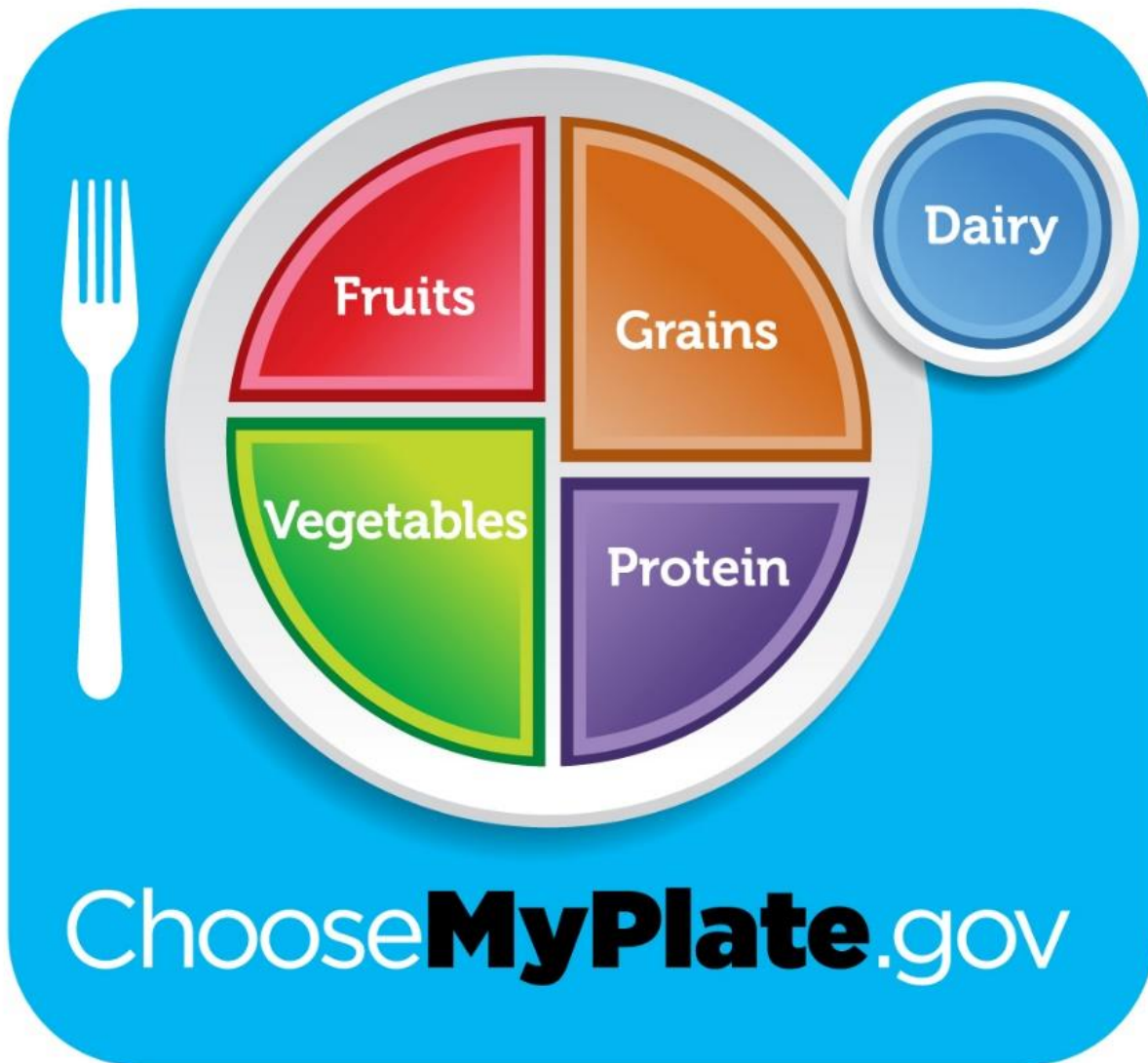
1. Wash your hands and sanitize work surfaces.
2. Thaw frozen breast milk. If you are using frozen breast milk, get the bottle from the freezer and place it under cold running water or place it in the refrigerator. Use the oldest bottle of breast milk first. Fat in breast milk may separate and rise to the top as it thaws. Gently swirl the container to mix any fat that may have separated. Previously frozen breast milk thawed in the refrigerator must be used within 24 hours.
3. If appropriate, prepare the formula for the infant according to the parent/guardian's written instructions.
4. If you are using a refrigerated bottle, get the bottle. Use the oldest bottle of breast milk first.
5. Check the label to ensure that you have the correct bottle with the correct name of the child.
6. Place the filled bottle in hot water in a ceramic crockpot* set on low (No higher than 120° Fahrenheit for no more than five minutes. Water should not be boiling.)
 - Do not allow bottles to warm at room temperature.
 - Make certain only clean bottles are placed in the crockpot.
 - Only one bottle at a time should be heated in the crockpot when possible.

*Place crockpots used to warm baby bottles as far back on the counter as possible, with electric cords tucked behind. To prevent accidental burns to young toddlers, avoid using towels under the crockpot, or fold the towel so that it sits only under the crockpot and does not reach the edge where toddlers might reach up and pull on it. Crockpots are not the only means that may be used to heat bottles. Bottle warmers can be used as well as a cup of hot tap water. Change the water in the crockpot and sanitize daily.

Note: Do not use a microwave oven to heat a bottle. Microwave ovens heat unevenly and place children at risk for serious burns.

8. Warm the bottle for young infants to "tepid" (about the same temperature as the underside of your wrist or forearm). Older infants may need to only have the chill removed, or may even prefer the bottle cool.
9. Check the temperature of the bottle's contents. Shake the bottle, then sprinkle a few drops from the bottle on your wrist or forearm to test the temperature of the contents. If the drops feel "hot," let the bottle cool a few minutes and then test the temperature again. Do not offer an infant a "hot" bottle.

Note: According to the American Academy of Pediatrics in Caring for Our Children, the risk of transmission of infection to caregivers who are feeding expressed human milk is very low. Wearing of gloves to feed expressed human milk is unnecessary, but caregivers with open cuts on their hands should avoid getting expressed human milk on their hands, especially if they have any open skin or sores on their hands.



USDA Meal Guidelines

Required for scoring *Environment Rating Scales* as of October 1, 2017

From Child and Adult Meal Patterns (<https://www.fns.usda.gov>)

Breakfast

	1-2 years	3-5 years	6-12 years
Milk	½ cup	¾ cup	1 cup
Vegetables, fruit or both	¼ cup	½ cup	½ cup
Grains*	½ oz eq	½ oz eq	1 oz eq

*Meat and meat alternatives may be used to substitute the entire grains component a maximum of 3 times a week. Oz eq= ounce equivalent

Lunch or Supper

	1-2 years	3-5 years	6-12 years
Milk	½ cup	¾ cup	1 cup
Meat or meat alternatives	1 oz	1 oz	2 oz
Vegetables	½ cup	½ cup	½ cup
Fruit	½ cup	½ cup	¾ cup
Grains	½ oz eq	½ oz eq	1 oz eq

Oz eq= ounce equivalent
Snack (Select 2 of the 5 components)

	1-2 years	3-5 years	6-12 years
Milk	½ cup	½ cup	1 cup
Meat or meat alternatives	½ oz	½ oz	1 oz
Vegetables	½ cup	½ cup	¾ cup
Fruit	½ cup	½ cup	¾ cup
Grains*	½ oz eq	½ oz eq	1 oz eq

Oz eq= ounce equivalent

Notes to be used in scoring ERS:

- For scoring the 3rd. editions of the scales, it is likely that only one meal or snack will be observed. It will not be possible to ensure all requirements are met, so base score on whatever is observed.
- All amounts are the minimum portions to be served, not the maximum
- Juice is limited to once per day, and must be full strength
- One serving per day must be whole grains
- Grain-based desserts no longer count as grains component
- Tofu counts as a meat alternative
- Unflavored whole milk required for 1-year old; unflavored low fat or fat-free milk required for 2-5 years, flavored milk allowed for children 6 and older
- Yogurt must contain no more than 23 grams of sugar in 6 oz.; breakfast cereals no more than 6 grams sugar per oz

USDA Meal Guidelines

Required for scoring *Environment Rating Scales* as of October 1, 2017

From Child and Adult Meal Patterns ([https:// www.fns.usda.gov](https://www.fns.usda.gov))

Breakfast

Birth through 5 months	5 through 11 months
4-6 fluid ounces breast milk or formula	6-8 fluid ounces breast milk or formula <i>and</i> 0-4 tablespoons of infant cereal, meat, fish, poultry, whole egg, cooked dry peas or beans; 0.2 oz cheese or cottage cheese (or combination of both) <i>and</i> 0-2 tablespoons vegetables or fruit or of both

Lunch/Supper

Birth through 5 months	5 through 11 months
4-6 fluid ounces breast milk or formula	6-8 fluid ounces breast milk or formula <i>and</i> 0-4 tablespoons of infant cereal, meat, fish, poultry, whole egg, cooked dry peas or beans; or 0.2 oz cheese; 0-4 oz of cottage cheese (volume), or 0-4 ounces or ½ cup yogurt or a combination of above <i>and</i> 0-2 tablespoons vegetables or fruit or combination of both

Snack

Birth through 5 months	5 through 11 months
4-6 fluid ounces breast milk or formula	2-4 fluid ounces breast milk or formula <i>and</i> ⁰¹ ½ slice bread or 2 crackers or 0-4 tablespoons of infant cereal or ready-to-eat breakfast cereal <i>and</i> ⁰² tablespoons vegetables or fruit or combinations of both

Notes to be used in scoring ERS:

- For scoring the 3rd editions of the scales, it is likely that only one meal or snack will be observed. It will not be possible to ensure all requirements are met, so base score on whatever is observed.
- All amounts are the minimum portions to be served, not the maximum
- Breastmilk or formula or both must be served
- Infant formula or dry cereal must be iron-fortified
- Fruit and vegetable juices must not be served

- A serving of grains must be whole-grain rich, enriched meal, or enriched flour
- Yogurt must contain no more than 23 grams of sugar in 6 oz.; breakfast cereals no more than 6 grams sugar per oz.
- Infants must be developmentally ready to be served solid foods or foods that must be gummed or chewed

In Conclusion

You now know most of our policies and procedures. If anything is changed in the center, we will notify you. If you would like to know about a policy in more detail, please speak to Betty (Director) or Sabah (Associate Director). I hope that most of you now realize that our policies are a mixture of basic common sense and good business practice.

So now that you have read our handbook, welcome to the Big Hugs Family! Let's get on with the education of your child! 😊

The End