



Helping Young Minds Grow

In Partnership with Real Life

Employee Handbook

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Thrive Learning Center is an equal opportunity employer and makes employment decisions regardless of one's protected class.

TLC's Mission and Philosophy

Thrive Learning Center is a non-profit childcare whose mission and philosophy is to provide a high-quality program that offers a safe, nurturing, and educational environment. We provide developmentally appropriate materials as well as a variety of learning experiences for children to encompass the whole child; social, emotional, physical, and intellectual. Our goal for our families is to provide childcare to help enable them to obtain employment or to further their education. We envision a center community where working families and those pursuing education will see thriving children reach their full potential.

Our goals and objectives are to:

- Provide an emotionally supportive and nurturing environment; helping our children and families thrive.
- Create a creative, stimulating, and positive learning atmosphere.
- Provide activities which increase each child's social, motor, emotional, and cognitive development.
- Create a positive and supportive working relationship with the parents/guardians/families of the children in our care.
- Encourage, assist, and promote a self-directed staff who work together as a team and to advocate continual staff development.
- TLC does not discriminate on the basis of race, sex, national origin, religion, or physical, mental, or sensory disability.

TLC's Structure and Services

TLC is located inside the Real Life church facility. Though partners and a ministry of Real Life, we are a self-supporting business operation.

The Director is responsible for setting policy, establishing the budget, and maintaining handbooks, manuals, and documents necessary for the childcare. A board liaison and board provide support and oversight to the childcare.

TLC lead teachers plan weekly curriculum for the children that is developmentally appropriate and based on the children's strengths, needs, and interests. TLC uses *My Teaching Strategies* for classroom planning and curriculum.

License and Professional Development Requirements

Thrive Learning Center is licensed by the City of Moscow and inspected annually. Therefore, all employees and volunteers must uphold a current Day Care Provider License. To receive the license all staff will be required to have pediatric first aid and pediatric CRP certification, as well as fingerprinting/a background check through the Moscow Police Department, which is required by

the State of Idaho. We will schedule the course for first and CPR, as well as background check and finger printing at the police department.

We require 20 hours of Idaho STARS training and as well as Pediatric CPR and First Aid certification within 30 days of hire, and a total of 20 hours of training (or educational equivalent) annually.

Thrive Learning Center and Idaho STARS requires all employees to put in 20 Idaho STARS approved training hours per year, or educational equivalents. Each employee is required to be enrolled in Idaho STARS/RISE and to join the Professional Development System (PDS) if working 15 hours or more per week. Staff are also to be responsible to monitor that all requirements are current. It will be part of the position to make sure your license is kept up to date, as well as pediatric first aid and pediatric CPR certification, along with the 20 hours of Idaho STARS training annually. With these training hours, the following training is required, annually:

- *ERS: A tool for Quality Improvement* (1 hour in RISE);
- *ET1: Preventing Children from Getting Hurt & Responding to Suspected Child Abuse or Neglect*;
- *Care Enough to Call*, 10-minute YouTube Video, then must sign the log stating you've watched the video

If an employee does not follow these policies and does not meet all stated requirements in the required time frame, then pay may be suspended or termination may be required.

Thrive Learning Center will pay for the CPR training and background/fingerprinting, however, if an employee leaves our employ within 12 months of their hire date, all those fees will need to be reimbursed. They will be taken out of the last paycheck, if not paid back by another method.

Workday Hours

Thrive Learning Center work hours will begin at 6:50 a.m. and end no later than 5:45 p.m., Monday through Friday (we open at 7:00 and close at 5:30) during the school district's school year. Summer hours may be adjusted, dependent on staff availability. Exceptions to these times may be paid time for staff training, professional development days, etc.

Holidays and Childcare Closures

We will be closed on these holidays: New Year's Day; Martin Luther King Day; President's Day; Memorial Day; Juneteenth; July 4th; Labor Day; Columbus Day; Veteran's Day; a half-day before Thanksgiving, Thanksgiving Day, and the day after Thanksgiving; Christmas Eve Day, Christmas Day, and the week between Christmas Day and New Year's Day, and periodically for longer weekends, depending on where a holiday falls. If the holiday falls on a weekend, we will be closed the following Monday or the previous Friday. We will also be closed two days per year for Professional Development Training days and two days a year for Parent/Teacher Conferences. Those days will be announced with advance notice.

Snow Days will be taken when the Moscow School District closes due to weather conditions or there is a National Weather Advisory, or for the loss of power for more than two hours. Please check the local radio station or your email messages. We will also notify you via email or text.

Payroll and Compensation

All staff are non-exempt employees. All timesheet records will be recorded through the Sage HR program in the office of the learning center. Staff are compensated according to position, education/experience, and longevity.

All paperwork for payroll, including direct deposit information, W-4, I-9, a copy of your driver's license or passport, and a copy of your social security card, need to be completed immediately upon hiring. Paydays are every two weeks and are through direct deposit. Please see the *Steps to Employment* checkoff sheet and *Employee Information* at the end of this handbook for more information including payroll dates and how to access paystubs.

All time off, including learning center closures due to holidays, health issues, etc. are considered unpaid. However, staff meetings and professional development days will be times paid. Currently, we are unable to offer any health or other employee benefits.

Staff Appearance and Hygiene

Employees should note that their appearance matters when representing Thrive Learning Center in front of our children and families. An employee's appearance can create a positive or negative impression that reflects on the center and culture.

Please adhere to the following:

1. All employees must be clean and well-groomed. Grooming styles dictated by religion and ethnicity are not restricted.
2. Standards of clothing and dress require modesty, cleanliness, and safety. No short shorts or short skirts or dresses; no low cut or strapless tops or blouses.
3. Employees must avoid clothes with stamps that are offensive or inappropriate.

Health Management/Wellness Policy

Thrive Learning center is a well-child childcare center. These are the guidelines we have set up for our center. Typically, we ask staff to abide by these same policies, however, there are some exceptions since our employees are adults, not children.

If a child is not feeling well, for any reason, parents will need to find alternate care. Control of communicable illness between childcare is a prime concern. Policies and guidelines related to outbreaks of communicable illness have been developed with the help of local health officials and childcare health

consultants. We follow the guidelines of the American Academy of Pediatrics, CDC, and the National Center on Early Childhood

In order to protect the entire group of children, we ask that parents assist us by not bringing their child if he/she has a contagious illness or exhibits signs of illness.

Please read carefully as we strictly adhere to these policies. If parents cannot fully and in good conscience agree to these policies, we suggest that they find other care for their child. Our ultimate goal is the health and safety of the children in our care, their families, and our staff. Also, please be aware, a physician's note DOES NOT supersede TLC's policy of excludable symptoms or the protocol for a child (or staff) returning to the childcare center.

NOT ALLOWED TO ATTEND:

- Fever of 99.7 degrees Fahrenheit or higher within the last 48 hours
- Severe coughing/sneezing in the last 24 hours
- Vomiting in the last 24 hours
- Diarrhea within the last 24 hours
- Conjunctivitis while in the contagious stages (less than 24 hours since antibiotic treatment)
- Unusual or unexplained loss of appetite, fatigue, irritability, or headache
- Bleeding, other than minor cuts and scrapes
- A communicable disease (measles; mumps; chicken pox; hand, foot, and mouth; influenza, etc.)
- Excessive colored discharge from eyes or nose, indicating a possible infection. (Example: if a teacher has had to wipe a child's nose more than a half-dozen times over the course of an hour, especially if the discharge is not clear)
- Chills or muscle pain
- New loss of taste or smell
- Head lice
- Ringworm that hasn't been treated and/or fully covered
- Unexplainable rash
- Is unable to participate in activities (indoor or outdoor)

Specifics:

- Children must be fever-free for at least 48 hours without medication before they are able to return to the center.
- Vomiting/Diarrhea - If one or more episodes of vomiting/diarrhea occur within the previous 24 hours, a child shall be excluded from the center. If vomiting/diarrhea occurs during the school day, parents will be called and asked to pick up their child immediately. Children will only be allowed back into the center after 24 hours since the last vomiting or diarrhea episode, without medication. We do not consider gagging due to excessive crying as vomiting.

- If a child becomes ill while at school, parents will be contacted through ProCare and/or text and asked to pick your child up. It is required that the child is picked up by a parent/guardian or other authorized pick-up adult within 60 minutes of the notice. When in doubt, parents are asked to keep their child home. They are also asked to notify the school through ProCare as well.
- If a child has a common cold (slight cough, sneezing, clear runny nose, and/or a temperature below 99.7 degrees) the child may be admitted into the center. However, we may require a doctor's note, require further information, or make the determination that it is not the best interest of the other children and staff to admit the child.
- We ask parents to dispense all medication at home whenever possible. Thrive Learning Center does not administer medication to children unless as a life-saving measure as prescribed by a health care provider (i.e., inhalers, epi-pen, seizure medication, etc.). We also require all such medication be accompanied with the prescription as well as any physician instructions for administration. Medications must be in the original pharmacy container with a label that includes the child's name, date the medication was issued and when it expires, prescriber's name, dose/instructions, pharmacy name and phone number, and relevant warnings. When the medication is accepted into TLC, there is an additional form to be completed giving permission for TLC to administer the medication. Homemade or folk remedies are not accepted.
- This is not an exhaustive list, so the best rule of thumb is if your child is not feeling well enough to go outside and play, or to play cheerfully in the classroom, then your child is too sick to attend childcare. Also, if your child requires constant attention, will not play, cries continuously, whines and/or wants to be held constantly, then your child will need to stay home.

ALLOWED TO ATTEND:

Typically, children with the following conditions do not have to be excluded from childcare, however, only if they feel well enough to participate in regular activities.

- Canker Sores
- Colds or coughs, allergies, without fever or other signs of illness (note from physician may be required)
- Cold Sores
- Croup
- Ear Infections (if treated)
- Pinworms
- Rash without fever or behavior change
- Thrush
- Urinary Tract Infection (if treated)
- Warts
- Yeast Diaper Rash
- Ringworm, after treatment and fully covered

Specifics:

Please know that every situation is unique and will be reviewed on a case-by-case basis. We reserve the right to amend these statements, ask for a physician's note and/or for additional information regarding each situation, and make the determination that it is in the best interest of our center, families, and staff that your child not be admitted. Again, please note that even though a health care provider might provide a note indicating a child may return to care before the child has met the return stipulation, it DOES NOT supersede the requirements to return to our childcare center. Our children, families, and staff are our top priority.

IMPORTANT NOTE – If a parent brings their child knowing they had symptoms prior to the 24 hours (or 48 hours for fever) or enter the facility while they or their child are sick, their child may be terminated from Thrive Learning Center immediately, and possibly indefinitely, without refund of payment(s) made. A signed contract agreeing to all our guidelines and policies is required by all parents/guardians before a child is registered and admitted into our center, so knowingly disregarding our guidelines and policies will constitute a breach of contract.

Employee Late/Tardiness Policy

Reporting late for your scheduled shift is not only unacceptable but is cause for disciplinary action or dismissal. If an employee consistently arrives late, pay will be suspended. (For every minute late, per day, up to 30 minutes, you will lose 30 minutes of pay). If tardiness continues, termination may be required. If absent without contacting the Director prior (except in the case of serious accidents or acute medical emergency), termination may be required. (Refer to the Discipline Process on page 6.)

It is very crucial that you be present in the classroom and prepared to greet the children assigned to your care, which typically requires arriving at least five minutes before your shift. Other employees are relying on your timeliness and our parents also have a schedule to keep. We ask our staff to present calmness and not appear rushed when they arrive and greet the children.

Employee Absence, Illness, and Bereavement Policies

In order to have adequate staff and familiar faces in each classroom daily, we expect you to be present during your scheduled working hours. The following need to be observed:

- We will only excuse unreported absences in cases of serious accidents or acute medical emergencies.
- If you state you are unable to come to work due to a non-acute illness, such as flu, pink eye, fever, etc., or minor accident, you will need to provide two symptoms and a physician's note (if seen by a physician). You will also need to provide your own substitute for your scheduled hours. A list of employees and their phone numbers will be provided to each employee. You

will also need to contact the Director to make her/him aware of your absence and who your substitute will be.

- If you face a medical emergency or family emergency that prevents you from coming to work one day, contact the Director as soon as possible, with a minimum of two hours' notice before your shift. Contact should be made by phone call **and** text, but you must verify that your messages were received; you cannot just assume they were received and not show up to your scheduled working hours.
- General bereavement policy:
 - Staff members are provided with excused time off for making arrangements, settling family affairs, bereavement, and/or attending the funeral or memorial service of a member of their immediate family.
 - Time off for a death in the family is arranged by notifying the Director. (See note on how to contact the Director for a medical or family emergency above.) Time off requests must be entered on the Sage HR site as well. If the staff member is unable to enter the request, their supervisor may enter the request in Sage on behalf of the staff member.
 - The maximum time off permitted for the death of an immediate family member (parent, brother, sister) or the death of a regular staff member's directly related (grandparent, aunt, or uncle or upon the death of a regular staff member's direct relative (first cousin, nephew, or niece) will be determined on a case-by-case basis.
 - Time off for other bereavement will also be reviewed on a case-by-case basis.
 - Thrive reserves the right to require documentation of the death (e.g., death certificate, obituary, documentation from funeral home, etc.). If such documentation is requested, it must be provided to the Director within 15 days of the first day of the leave.
- You must check in each day of your unscheduled absence until you return to work. A lack of communication during such absence could result in termination of employment at TLC.

Planned absences, such as appointments or vacation, must be made through the Sage HR site, as well as a verbal request given to the Director as soon as possible. The Director will either approve or decline each time off request. Keep in mind that we require a full staff, even during university breaks, etc., so not it's highly probably that not every request can be granted. A minimum of two weeks is required and four is preferable. If it is determined that you have had excessive absences, such will be addressed by the Director. Showing up regularly for work is imperative to the efficient and effective operation of our center. All staff rely on each other to show up to work regularly.

Employee Termination and Resignation Policies

- Employment at Thrive Learning Center is "at-will", meaning that you or Thrive Learning Center may terminate the employment relationship at any time and for any non-discriminatory reason.
- You resign when you voluntarily inform the Director that you will stop working for Thrive Learning Center. We also consider you terminated if you don't come to work for [three] consecutive days without notice.

- You are asked to give at least two weeks' notice when resigning; four weeks being preferable.
- You must submit a written and signed notice of resignation for our records.

Employee Review and Evaluation

- After the initial two-week trial period has passed, every employee will be given a 30 to 90-day trial /review period. After such time, said employee will be notified as to the outcome of that review and as to whether their employment will be maintained at the daycare. Adherence to all the above policies will be part of the review process.
- An annual evaluation will also be given to each employee.

Smoking Policy

Real Life Ministries and Thrive Learning Center, as a lessee of Real Life Ministries, have declared all areas of our facility, including near the entrances, to be NON-SMOKING.

Reasonable Suspicion Drug Testing

Thrive Learning Center has the responsibility to implement Reasonable Suspicion Testing, also known as For Cause Drug Testing. This testing will be performed when supervisors have evidence or reasonable cause to suspect an employee of drug use. Evidence is based upon direct observation, either by a supervisor or another employee. Specific reasons for reasonable suspicion testing include physical evidence of illicit substances, patterns of erratic or abnormal behavior, disorientation, or confusion, and/or an inability to complete routine tasks.

Ethical Conduct

Staff members and volunteers of Thrive Learning Center:

- Must always be ethical, conscientious, courteous, honest, trustworthy, diligent, and compassionate.
- Need to have a positive and pleasant attitude, as well as a love for children.
- Must be pleasant and friendly with all children, staff, and families.
- Will need to discuss with the Director any conflict that arises between staff members concerning any conflict or policy if other measures to resolve have failed.
- Will keep all cell phones outside of the classroom. At NO time while in the classroom with children is it acceptable to use a cell phone for calling or texting or an iPad for texting, checking personal email, etc. All iPads are for school use and for teachers to use for classroom planning, logging items into ProCare, messaging parents in ProCare; never for personal use or for children to use.
- Will not take pictures of children without admin permission.
- Will follow our social media policies regarding any posts made on private/personal social media sites.

Confidentiality Policy

Confidentiality is required in learning center programs to protect the rights of children and families. Staff may not discuss or share written information, pictures, or any other identifying information about a child, family, or staff without the written permission. When information is shared it is based on a need-to-know and is done with the written permission of the family to support decision-making and planning or provided to legal or licensing authorities when required.

No private information can be shared with families/parents regarding another child. For example, if Jimmy bites Tommy and the Tommy's parents inquire as to who bit their child, you are not allowed to give that information, stating it is confidential information. If they press for a name, please refer them to the Director. This policy also encompasses all *Social Media Policies* as well (see below).

Social Media Policies

Though we cannot restrict what you post on your own social media profiles, we are providing you with guidelines about what you shouldn't post and provide you with which could require disciplinary actions if your posts affect Thrive Learning Center' image or go against our privacy and/or confidentiality policies. For these, we are entitled to set the rules of posting as follows:

- As a Thrive Learning Center employee, you are expected to be mindful of the image you may be portraying on your social media profiles. The families we serve expect professionalism and confidentiality from those of us that care for their children. Any negative or "trashing" posts of our learning center, staff, children, or families can be cause for dismissal.
- Staff may not "friend" parents of Thrive Learning Center as maintaining a professional attitude towards parents is required.
- We expect you to always adhere to our confidentiality policies. We also caution you to avoid violating our anti-harassment policies or posting something that might make your collaboration with your colleagues more difficult. Any such postings are likely to have disregarded our policy on cell phone usage while at the learning center, which can also result in disciplinary action.
- It's imperative to be mindful that any "private" post is easily made public and cannot only impact you personally but can also impact our learning center. It's also essential to ensure that others know that your personal account or statements don't represent our learning center. You shouldn't state or imply that your personal opinions and content are authorized or endorsed by Thrive Learning Center. We advise using a disclaimer such as "opinions are my own" to avoid misunderstandings.
- Disciplinary actions will be taken if any post discloses confidential or personal information (which includes pictures of other staff, children in our care, Thrive Learning Center families, etc.) or any offensive, derogative, discriminatory, offensive, or libelous comments towards other members of the online community.

- The disciplinary actions (listed in the “Employee Discipline Process”) will be followed for any non-adherence to these social media policies. We may have to take disciplinary action leading up to and including termination if employees do not follow this policy's guidelines.

Employee Discipline Process

Our disciplinary process typically has six steps of increasing strictness. These steps are:

1. Verbal warning
2. Informal meeting with the Director
3. Formal reprimand
4. Formal disciplinary meeting
5. Suspension (without pay)
6. Termination

Disciplinary action may be made for performance issues (i.e. absenteeism, tardiness, etc.); minor offenses (one-time), such as breach of dress code, smoking policy, etc.; serious misconduct/repeated offense as in rudeness to parents, students, or staff; unwillingness to follow health and safety policies, etc.; serious violations, which immediately go to step 5, such as substance abuse, offensive behavior, or retaliation against another employee; illegal behavior which requires immediate step 6, as in corruption/bribery, sexual harassment, workplace violence, embezzlement/fraud, etc.

Inclusion Policy

All families will be treated with dignity and respect for their individual needs and/or differences and confidentiality will be maintained. Children with special needs will be accepted into our program under the guidelines of the American Disabilities Act (ADA). Requests for reasonable accommodation will be promptly considered.

A written individual health care and/or education plan must be provided from a parent/guardian, signed by a physician and/or education specialist, specifically addressing a child's needs including but not limited to medications, specific food or feeding requirements, life threatening allergies, treatments and special equipment, and/or unique staff training needs. The parent must partner with the center staff to train teachers on any specific care for their child (by themselves or a medical professional) depending on the situation. Teachers will receive updated trainings on specific special needs that are encountered in their classrooms. Thrive Learning Center encourages parents to include our staff in child IFSP/IEP meetings for their children. This partnership ensures a positive partnership with the purpose of supporting the child in the most consistent way possible. IFSP/IEP meetings can be held at our center. The Director can be contacted to facilitate setting up such meetings.

Children with special needs will be given the opportunity to participate in the program to the fullest extent possible. Thrive Learning Center will cooperate with other agencies that could provide services on-site. Teachers will seek written permission from parents to consult with other agencies or to exchange information prior to doing so.

Employee/Parental Relationships

The relationship between staff and parents/families should be amiable, yet professional, not as a friendship. We need to always maintain a professional attitude with our families.

Please greet the parents (when applicable) and child each morning with a warm smile and kind greeting, addressing the child by name. Help make the child feel as they belong and become at ease by offering encouragement and a distraction to the child. It is our policy that all staff members and volunteers shall treat parents and children with respect, honoring confidentiality and being truly honest.

Please refer to the *Ethical Conduct* policy as well on other guidelines for employee/parental guidelines.

For everyone's safety, the release of a child is only to those persons authorized on the enrollment form, with no exceptions. There is a list in ProCare of parents/guardians and other authorized pick-up individuals.

Employee/Parental Communication

All end-of-the-day communication with parents/families should come directly through either the Director or the child's lead teacher. This is specifically important regarding any behavioral issues or injuries that may have occurred. If neither the Director or lead teacher are available, the assistant teacher releasing a child should direct the parent to our ProCare app to direct any questions to either the Director or the lead teacher. This is especially important if the staff releasing the child hasn't spent most of the day with that child. This also applies to observation sheets. Those should come from either the Director or the lead. If it's something urgent and neither of those individuals is available, the staff may contact the Director or the lead via phone or text to view and consent/ not consent to any observation written by a teacher other than the lead or the Director.

If the Director is having a conversation with a parent/guardian about their child, it is inappropriate for another staff member to step in, unless asked to do so by the Director. The Director may call upon the lead teacher if there is a specific question, etc. The same is true if a lead is having a conversation with a parent/guardian. It is not the role of an assistant teacher to step into a conversation unless asked by the Director or a lead teacher.

On-going communication throughout the day should come from each classroom's lead teacher. If that teacher is absent, then any communication (other than just logging naps, potty, etc.) should be okayed by the Director. All communication from a staff member needs to be congenial and only through the ProCare app. If something negative needs addressed, that needs to be routed through the Director.

Also is there is an incident that takes place with the Director is unavailable, it is the staff member's responsibility to communicate such with the Director about the incident. This includes a child becoming ill, getting injured, etc.

Employee Relationships

We require professional and congenial relationships between staff members. Employees are not expected to be friends but are expected to be friendly with other staff members. All relationships outside of TLC between staff members needs to be unknown to the children in our care. Again, we want to portray ourselves professionally to the children in our care and their families. Please keep all personal/relationship information out of the classrooms, such as talk of a boyfriend/girlfriend, discussions of places/things done or other information that would be perceived as inappropriate by parents and/or other coworkers, as well as the Director. We want you to be friendly with the children you are caring for, but there's difference between being friendly and oversharing. If you have a question and aren't sure what could possibly be considered inappropriate, please speak to the Director.

Child Abuse and Neglect Policy

Our staff, employees, and volunteers are mandatory reporters for the state of Idaho, which means that we are REQUIRED by law to report suspected cases of child abuse or neglect to the appropriate local agency. Abuse may be physical, emotional, or sexual. Neglect is the failure, refusal, or inability, for reasons other than poverty, to provide necessary care, food, clothing, shelter, or medical care. Staff who report in good faith are immune from civil or criminal liability. Staff who intentionally fail to report suspicions are subject to fines under the law. Staff will annually view the video, "Reporting Child Abuse: Care Enough to Call".

Guidance and Discipline Policy

Our goal is to help children regulate their own behavior with positive guidance from teachers by redirecting and negotiation. We will maintain realistic expectations of the child's behavior while assisting them with problem solving. Good classroom management and positive reinforcement will be provided. If the child's behavior remains out of control, removal of a child from the group is a last resort. No physical punishment or threats are allowed at Thrive Learning Center, either by parents or staff.

Suggestions for re-direction:

1. Children's good behavior should be recognized and encouraged.
2. Children should be taught by example through fair and consistent rules, in a relaxed atmosphere.
3. Staff should show understanding and firmness, while giving clear direction and guidance at the child's level of understanding.
4. Children should be removed to a safe area if their behavior will harm themselves or others.
5. When behavior is unacceptable, state positive alternatives such as, "Blocks are for building, but we can throw the ball." Help the child understand why the behavior is not permissible.

Pyramid Model

At Thrive Learning Center, we want all children to have social and emotional skills that empower them to succeed in school and life. Our leadership team is dedicated to ensuring staff are trained and implementing the Pyramid Model. This model is an inclusive program that supports children birth to 5 years, including those with challenging behaviors. This is done by all staff supporting children with developing nurturing and responsive relationships, social-emotional supports, and consistent schedules and routines that are age appropriate for all classrooms and areas throughout the center. The leadership team is committed to providing evidence-based research innovative techniques, and community resources with staff members and families for everyone to be successful.

Classroom Management Policy and Procedures

Staff and volunteers are responsible to see that the classroom space is kept clean and safe. (See *Naps and Cleaning Procedures*). Please model good organizational skills for the children by returning items where they belong when not in use. Always maintain constant eyesight on each child while in the classroom and the playground.

It is a major responsibility as a staff member to work with the children at their level, interact and play with them, help encourage new ideas, thoughts, and learning. Playing with the children helps to create a calm and nurturing environment that is so valuable in eliminating chaos. It is also the staff member's job to learn new ways to keep the children's attention and keep them regularly engaged in an activity. A bored or neglected child is highly likely to cause a discipline problem. Our curriculum is created in part to keep the children regularly engaged, and it also gives ideas for behavioral issues you might encounter.

Specific Discipline Policies

- At no time is it ever appropriate to shame or threaten a child or to mock a child. It is also not acceptable to discuss a child's negative behavior in front of a child with other staff or children.
- Playing favorites has very negative impacts on a classroom and on children. All children should be treated the same as much as possible. Therefore, it's never okay to tell a child that they are your favorite, or to exhibit behavior that would show the same.
- Food is never to be used as a punishment or a reward. If a child refuses to eat, there should be no chastisement involved. We do encourage children to take a "no thank you bite", but nothing beyond that.
- We do not use "time-out" as a method of discipline, either. There are places in each classroom where a child may go if they need a break from either an activity or from their classmates. The period that a child should take a break is dependent upon their age; it needs to be age appropriate.

- Children should not be punished in front of other children by isolating them. If a child is in danger of hurting themselves or others, then have another staff member step in and you take the child to another room where they can be safe, whether in the cozy corner, or another safe place. It is never acceptable to restrain a child, except if they are in danger of hurting themselves or another.
- If a child is bitten by another child, give the offender another toy or other type of distraction to help avoid future incidents. The offender should be removed from being near the bitten child and closely monitored after such an incident to ensure no further biting happens. The bitten child should be given most of the attention, not the offender. Parents of both children should be given a written notice at the end of the day (without the offender's name). If such incidences continue between specific children, those children should be separated into different classrooms for a period deemed necessary by the Director.

Other Policies and Procedures

Milk or formula that is in a cup or bottle upon arrival should be discarded. Wash and sanitize all bottles after each use.

We are also required to have walking children have their shoes and socks on throughout the day. This is required in case of emergency where we would have to evacuate the building.

TLC's Developmental Tracking

As early childcare providers/educators we know the importance of tracking children's developmental milestones. We have implemented CDC's *Milestone Tracker* to help us better understand each child's skills and abilities, which we are able to share with parents/guardians, so we all know when to act early if there are concerns. We have also implemented the Ages and Stages Questionnaire (ASQ) as it looks at how children are doing in important areas, such as speech, physical ability, social skills, and problem-solving skills. ASQ can help identify a child's strengths as well as any areas where a child may need support.

We desire to work alongside parents/guardians to assist in any way we can to improve the information we are able to share regarding a child's development. We believe by using the *Milestone Tracker* and ASQ, we will be able to provide this information to parents/guardians.

CDC's *Milestone Tracker* app, developed by the "Learn the Signs. Act Early" program, helps us as well as parents/guardians better understand each child's skills and abilities, track and celebrate developmental milestones, and share developmental progress from ages 2 months through 5 years.

Lead Teachers will work with the Director in using the *Milestone* tracker app to assist the parents in tracking the developmental progress of the children in their classroom. Those documents will be shared with the the parents to aid them in sharing any areas of concern with their pediatrician or other medical professionals. The same will be true for the ASQ. Families will fill out the questionnaires and then the Lead Teacher of that child's classroom, or the Director will score the questionnaire. Lead Teachers and

the Director will receive ASQ training which will train these staff/administrators what ASQ is, how to use it effectively, and how to score the questionnaires.

Families will be asked to fill out an ASQ annually (usually in late-spring or before the beginning of a new school year) and then as requested or as needed before proceeding to a new classroom. The ASQ is a set of questionnaires about children's development. It has been used for more than 20 years to make sure children are developing well. These questionnaires are designed to be filled out by the parent/guardian/caregiver as these are the active partners in their child's learning and development. By completing the ASQ, families are making sure their child is off to the best possible start. If a child is developing without concerns, there is nothing more that families will need to do. If a child has trouble with some skills, Thrive can help families with the next steps. We partner with the Infant and Toddler Program so children under three can receive services through their program and children over three can receive an assessment by the Moscow School District upon request. Finding delays or problems as early as possible supports young children's healthy development. By working in partnership with our families and by having them complete the ASQ, families are assisting in setting up their child for success now and in the future.

Transportation Safety Policy

Our first responsibility is to protect the safety of the children at Thrive Learning Center, and because we are mandated reporters, if we deem that is unsafe for a parent (or other authorized pick-up individual) to transport a child for any reason, we must ask them to:

- Allow us to call an alternate pickup person to pick up
- Call them a cab (and they will be responsible to pay)
- If they do not have a car seat for your child, we will ask them to go get it and come back. (Late fees will apply if it ends up being past our operating hours.)
- Staff are under no circumstances allowed to put a car seat in an individual's car or buckle the child into the car seat. You can simply state that you are not allowed to do so. (It could be grounds for a lawsuit if they end up in an accident, etc.)

If they insist and take the child even after we believe it is unsafe for you to do so, we are required to call 911. It is also helpful to get a picture of their license plate at that time.

General Work Information

Breakfast, Lunch, and Snacks

We will provide the children breakfast, served at 8:30; lunch, served at 11:30; and snacks served at 3:00. No foods are allowed from home other than those needed for infants and toddlers needing special baby food, or children with specific allergies. We will adhere to all necessary precautions for any children with allergies.

At mealtime, the teacher or volunteer will need to sit with the children they are caring for, then move around the room as necessary, assisting and focusing on the children, helping as needed with use of utensils, drinks, etc. Staff will need to wear gloves and can offer food items and encourage them to at least try each item, but never force a child to eat or shame them for not eating or trying a food. When feeding the infants/walkers, place child secured in a highchair. Please stay with the child while eating. Staff are not permitted to eat other food items/snacks in front of the children.

Staff are encouraged to eat meals with the children, eating the same food and amount that the children are served. Staff may encourage to try new foods, take a "no thank you bite", etc., but may not force a child to eat or shame them for not eating or not trying a food.

Lunch breaks will be taken following the children's lunch time or on the staff's break. A substitute teacher or volunteer may need to be in place in the classroom while another staff member goes on break, depending on staff/child ratios.

Thirty minutes is our standard lunch break during an eight-hour shift or 15 minutes for less than an eight-hour shift. If breaks are not scheduled, please check with the Director to make sure a break time is suitable at your requested time. Again, we must ensure that our staff/child ratios are adhered to.

Cameras

Each of the Thrive classrooms, as well as the MPR and the bathroom sink areas are equipped with cameras. These are used for our protection as well as for the children's. They are also used as a tool to improve our program. The Director and our Idaho STARS consultants may use them to observe a child's behavior, view classroom dynamics, etc., again for the purpose of improving our overall program.

Technology

There are iPads available for each classroom. There is also a school laptop and a school desktop available for staff use. All of these items should only be used for the purpose of communicating to parents through ProCare (iPads), logging items into ProCare (iPads), and then for training/educational purposes for staff to complete required training, enhanced training for their position at Thrive, etc. If you plan on using technology in the classroom other than the iPad, please check-in with the Director as to what the computer will be used for. Never, at any time, other than in an emergency, can a staff use technology in the classroom for personal purposes.

Cleaning Procedures

Each employee will need to follow the guidelines for cleaning classrooms, common areas, and closing as per the Cleaning Checklists that are in each individual classroom and the checklists for the End of the Day Checklists for the overall center. Each employee needs to assist in the cleaning and closing process if on shift during the closing of the day.

Notes to Parents

Lead teachers are responsible for notifying parents in ProCare of incidents throughout the day, which may include a behavioral issue with a child or other similar issues that we feel the parents need to be made aware of. These communications need to be respectful of the child as well as the parents, but communicate clearly what has taken place. Day-to-day notifications to parents can be regularly communicated to parents without admin approval. Other communications that are of significant importance, as in serious behavioral issues of their child, an injury, etc., those should be logged and submitted for admin approval. In the case the Director is out, the lead should find another lead teacher and ask for their input, suggestions, etc. If a lead teacher is gone for the day and something needs to be communicated by an assistant teacher, that teacher may check with the Director to get permission to send the note, or if not available, the assistant may contact the lead teacher by phone/text to get their permission and to make them aware, or check with another lead. If neither a lead or the Director is available, the note should wait until the next day, unless it's a medical issue that parents need to be made immediately aware of. If you're in doubt of whether a specific notification should be written/given, please submit for admin approval or check with the Director before sending.

Payments

Thrive Learning Center employees are unable to take tuition payments from parents/guardians. They may be directed to the lockbox down the hall by the Real Life offices to drop off any payments they wish to make. The majority of payments are to be made through the Wonderschool app.

Medications

We ask parents to dispense all medication at home whenever possible. Thrive Learning Center does not administer medication to children unless as a life-saving measure as prescribed by a health care provider (i.e., inhalers, epi-pen, seizure medication, etc.). We also require all such medication be accompanied with the prescription as well as any physician instructions for administration. Medications must be in the original pharmacy container with a label that includes the child's name, date the medication was issued and when it expires, prescriber's name, dose/instructions, pharmacy name and phone number, and relevant warnings. When the medication is accepted into TLC, there is an additional form to be completed giving permission for TLC to administer the medication. Homemade or folk remedies are not accepted.

Emergency Preparedness Plan

Each classroom contains a fire escape map and an in-class emergency area, along with a YIKES booklet with all the emergency plan information. Please read and study each carefully.

If we need to evacuate our building, we will relocate to the fenced-in outdoor playground in the parking lot. Our onsite safe place is in the Real Life conference room by the interior play space. Our longer-term off-site location is Taco Bell. In the event of relocating, parents will be contacted for notifications of the situation.

Fire, Safety, and Emergencies

We practice regular fire drills as well as lock-in drills. A severe weather drill may also be conducted on occasion. If we need to evacuate our building, we will relocate offsite to the outdoor childcare playground in the parking lot. Once we have relocated, parents/guardians will be contacted for notifications of the situation via the ProCare school app, either by email or text.

Our onsite safe place/shelter is in the Conference Room of our building. If deemed necessary for further safety or for an extended period, we will relocate to the approved off-site location, which is Taco Bell.

Thrive Learning Center Childcare will only transport in the case of an emergency and parents/guardians will be notified immediately after the child is secure. Please make sure you provide any changes to us with your emergency contact information.

OTHER: SAFETY OF THE SCHOOL AND OTHERS

All schools in Idaho, including Thrive Learning Center, have a zero tolerance policy for school threats. We also have a zero tolerance policy for violence against teachers and/or other students. If a child while at Thrive threatens another student, teacher, or the school in general, we will call CPS and/or the Moscow Police Department. If it appears to be an imminent threat, we will call 911. We impose a “three strikes you’re out” for any such behavior and the third time will result in termination of care.

Safe Sleep Policy

We will always observe the guidelines provided by the Idaho Department of Health and Welfare. We believe that a safe sleep environment for infants helps lower the chances of an infant dying from SIDS, prevents suffocation and overheating. Please read the Infant Safe Sleep Practices page included at the end of this handbook. A copy is also provided in the Parents Handbook.



Infant Safe Sleep Practices Tip Sheet for Idaho Child Care Providers

Federal law, and ICCP program rules, focus on promoting safe sleep practices for infants (0-12 months old) that reduce the risk of SIDS/SUID (Sudden Infant Death Syndrome/Sudden Unexplained Infant Death). These practices should be observed at all times, and will be required to successfully complete required health and safety inspections for all ICCP participating providers.

- **Follow current American Academy of Pediatrics recommendations concerning safe sleep practices including SIDS/SUIDS risk reduction.**
- **Supervise napping or sleeping children.**
 - Child care providers must be within sight or hearing of the children at all times, including nap time, and must be available and able to immediately assist a child in an emergency.
 - *Supervision by sight and hearing is always recommended.*
 - Napping children who are not within sight of a staff member, must always be within easy hearing distance.
 - All children (including the provider's children), asleep or awake, count towards ratio requirements.
 - Video equipment or baby monitors are not a substitute for supervision or monitoring.
- **All cribs, bassinets, "play pens," and "pack-n-plays" must be in good repair and approved by the Consumer Product Safety Commission (CPSC) as infant/toddler sleep devices.**
 - Bouncers, swings, car seats, hammocks, boxes, Boppy's, Bumbos, and Dock-a-Tots are NOT acceptable sleep devices.
 - If a child falls asleep in a device or location that is not acceptable for sleep, the child must be moved to CPSC approved sleep device.
 - Mattresses must fit snugly and be made specifically for the size crib in which they are placed.
 - Bed linens used under children on cots, cribs, and playpens must be tight-fitting.
- **Place an infant to sleep on their back, on a flat sleep surface.**
 - If an infant turns over while sleeping, the child care provider must return the infant to his or her back until the infant is able to independently roll from back to front and front to back.
 - *This developmental skill should be easily observed when an infant is awake or asleep.*
 - If there is a medical requirement for a child to be in *any* other sleep position, a physician's note (on professional letterhead with contact information for the medical doctor) must be on file at the facility, and made available to the inspector.
 - *A note from a physician is not an exclusion of liability for a child care provider.*

- **Sufficiently light the room to be able to observe skin color in case of changes.**
 - Monitor children’s breathing patterns through visual observation, and note any changes.
- **Allow infants to follow their own sleep patterns.**
 - Infants need to sleep when they are tired and not according to a schedule determined by the early learning provider.
- **Do not allow loose blankets, stuffed toys, pillows, crib bumpers, or similar items inside a crib.**
 - Infant sleep clothing, such as sleep sacks or pajamas, may be used to keep infants warm.
 - After an infant first exhibits signs of attempting to roll (around 3 months old), swaddling must not be used.
 - *The use of sleep sacks is recommended if swaddling is practiced.*
 - *Swaddling should be snug around the chest but allow ample room at the hips and knees to avoid hip dislocation or hip dysplasia.*
- **Items that pose a strangulation, fall, or entrapment hazard must be kept well out of an infant’s reach while in the crib, bassinet, or other approved sleep equipment.**
 - Carefully consider the placement of electrical cords, cords for blinds and shades, lamps, baby monitors, blankets, televisions, toys, blankets, towels, wall hangings, pictures, etc. to ensure that there is no way a child could reach them from their sleep location.
 - Do not use strings to hang any object (mobile, toy, diaper bag, etc.), on or near the crib.
 - Pacifiers may be used. However, pacifiers should not be clipped, pinned, or tied to an infant’s clothing, and they should not be tied around an infant’s neck, wrist, or other body part.
- **Do not allow a blanket or any other item to cover or drape over an occupied crib, bassinet, or other equipment where infants commonly sleep.**
 - Items draped over a crib impair an early learning provider’s ability to see and hear the infant.
 - Draped items could fall on top of infant creating a risk of suffocation or entanglement.
- **Do not allow clothing to cover any portion of an infant’s head or face while sleeping, and readjust these items when necessary.**
 - Clothing covering an infant’s head could impact their ability to breathe.
- **Prevent infants from getting too warm while sleeping. It is a good practice to dress an infant in one more layer of clothing than you are wearing to be comfortable in the same environment.**
 - Signs that an infant is too warm or in distress include, but are not limited to:
 - *Sweating*
 - *A sudden rise in temperature*
 - *Flushed, pale, or hot and dry skin, warm to the touch*
 - *Vomiting*
 - *Refusing to drink*
 - *Depressed fontanelle (“soft spot”)*
 - *Irritability*



BREASTFEEDING POLICY

Because breastfeeding has been shown to be the superior form of infant nutrition, providing a multitude of health benefits to both infant and mother, and because breastfeeding employees need ongoing support from childcare providers to provide their milk for their babies, Thrive Learning Center subscribes to the following policy:

1. 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 to breastfeed their babies or express milk.
2. A refrigerator will be made available for storage of expressed breastmilk. Breastfeeding mothers and employees may store their expressed breast milk in the center's refrigerator. Mothers should provide their own containers, clearly labeled with name and date. The center will follow guidelines from the American Academy of Pediatrics and Centers for Disease Control in ensuring that breastmilk is properly treated to avoid waste. Universal precautions are not required in handling human milk.
3. 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. Artificial baby milks (formula) and solid foods will not be provided unless the mother has requested.
4. All center staff will be trained in the proper storage and handling of human milk, as well as ways to support breastfeeding mothers.
5. Breastfeeding employees shall be provided flexible breaks to accommodate breastfeeding or milk expression, for their children up to 12 months of age.
6. Breastfeeding employees shall be provided flexible breaks to accommodate breastfeeding or milk expression, for their children up to 12 months of age. The time allowed would not exceed the normal time allowed for lunch and breaks. For time above and beyond normal lunch and breaks, an employee must clock out, or they can come in a little earlier or leave a little late to make up the time.

Thrive Learning Center
Employee Handbook Agreement

I, _____ have read and agree to comply with all policies and procedures contained in the *Thrive Learning Center Employee Handbook*. I also confirm that I have read and understood my program's policies related to confidentiality. I agree to comply with these policies to protect the confidentiality of the children, families, staff, and volunteers I work with.

Employee Signature

Date

Thrive Learning Center Director

Date

Thrive Learning Center is an equal opportunity employer and makes employment decisions regardless of one's protected class.

Your signature will be kept on file for the duration of your

employment or volunteer service.

Thrive Learning Center

Confidentiality Agreement

Confidentiality is required in childcare programs to protect the rights of children and families. Staff may not discuss or share written information, pictures, or any other identifying information about a child, family, or staff without the written permission. When information is shared it is based on a need-to-know and is done with the written permission of the family to support decision-making and planning or provided to legal or licensing authorities when required.

No private information can be shared with families/parents regarding another child or staff member. This agreement also encompasses all *Social Media Policies* as well.

Employee Signature

Date

Thrive Learning Center Director

Date