

# ***Thomas Center for Learning and Physical Literacy Development***



## **Family Handbook**

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## TABLE OF CONTENTS

<b>About This Handbook</b> .....	5
<b>Mission and Vision</b> .....	7
<b>Philosophy</b> .....	7
<b>The Staff</b> .....	7
<b>Diversity &amp; Inclusivity</b> .....	7
<b>General Safety Procedures for our Facility and Teachers</b> .....	8
<b>Health Policy</b> .....	8
<b>Policy for Staying Home &amp; Return to Our Facility After Illness</b> .....	9
<b>Promoting Health Accountability</b> .....	9
<b>Increased Cleaning</b> .....	10
<b>Licensing and Accreditation</b> .....	10
<b>Educational Programming</b> .....	11
<b>Curriculum</b> .....	11
<b>Assessment</b> .....	13
<b>Behavior Guideline Philosophy</b> .....	17
<b>Guidance Procedures</b> .....	18
<b>Enrollment</b> .....	19
<b>Admissions Process</b> .....	19
<b>Registration &amp; Requirements for Enrollment</b> .....	20
<b>Withdrawing</b> .....	20
<b>Dismissal from the Our Program</b> .....	21
<b>Hours of Operation</b> .....	21
<b>Parking &amp; Carpool</b> .....	21
<b>Arrival</b> .....	21
<b>Classroom Schedule</b> .....	22
<b>Classroom Activities</b> .....	22
<b>Play Yard and Outdoors</b> .....	24
<b>Mealtimes</b> .....	24
<b>Personal Belongings</b> .....	25
<b>Change in Pickup Person</b> .....	26
<b>Departure</b> .....	26
<b>Communication and Staying Informed</b> .....	27

<b>Parent/Teacher Conferences .....</b>	<b>27</b>
<b>Procure.....</b>	<b>27</b>
<b>The School Year.....</b>	<b>28</b>
<b>Program Calendar.....</b>	<b>28</b>
<b>Inclement Weather Days.....</b>	<b>28</b>
<b>Celebrations &amp; Birthdays.....</b>	<b>28</b>
<b>Communication &amp; Family Involvement.....</b>	<b>29</b>
<b>Conferences.....</b>	<b>29</b>
<b>Family Support.....</b>	<b>29</b>
<b>Home Language.....</b>	<b>30</b>
<b>Confidentiality.....</b>	<b>30</b>
<b>Tuition &amp; Fees.....</b>	<b>31</b>
<b>Tuition.....</b>	<b>31</b>
<b>Family Discounts.....</b>	<b>32</b>
<b>Temporary Withdrawal.....</b>	<b>32</b>
<b>Health &amp; Safety.....</b>	<b>32</b>
<b>Daily Health Checks.....</b>	<b>32</b>
<b>Illness Policy.....</b>	<b>32</b>
<b>Medications.....</b>	<b>33</b>
<b>Topical Creams and Sunscreen.....</b>	<b>37</b>
<b>Medical Report &amp; Immunization Record.....</b>	<b>37</b>
<b>Cleaning &amp; Sanitation.....</b>	<b>37</b>
<b>Hand Washing.....</b>	<b>37</b>
<b>Universal Precautions.....</b>	<b>38</b>
<b>Safety.....</b>	<b>39</b>
<b>Mandated reporting requirements.....</b>	<b>41</b>
<b>Center Policies.....</b>	<b>42</b>
<b>Smoke-Free and Weapon-Free Environment.....</b>	<b>42</b>
<b>Transportation.....</b>	<b>42</b>
<b>Babysitting.....</b>	<b>42</b>
<b>Program Oversight.....</b>	<b>42</b>
<b>Code of Ethical Conduct.....</b>	<b>43</b>
<b>Commitment to Diversity.....</b>	<b>43</b>
<b>Grievance Procedure.....</b>	<b>43</b>

**Legal Information** ..... 43  
    **Nondiscrimination**..... 43  
    **Americans with Disabilities Act**..... 43  
    **Record Retention** ..... 44  
    **USDA** ..... 44

## **About This Handbook**

This handbook will help to explain our program and our operational policies further. We reserve the right to update this handbook at any time, but we will let families know if we do. Please take a few minutes to become familiar with this information, along with the Enrollment Agreement provided to you. On your Enrollment Agreement, you will be asked to acknowledge your receipt and agreement to the policies outlined in this handbook. Thomas Center for Learning and Physical Literacy Development is hereinafter referred to as Thomas Center for Learning.

**These policies are subject to change at the discretion of Thomas Center for Learning and Physical Literacy Development. This document will be regularly reviewed and updated in order to ensure that all policies and procedures are functioning as intended, and to ensure the health and safety of all staff and students.**

## **Who We Are**

### **Mission and Vision**

The mission of Thomas Center for Learning and Physical Literacy Development is to offer programs to engage children ages 5 to 12 in fitness, recreation and healthy habits to develop and sustain an active lifestyle. This mission is carried out daily by highly trained staff, low teacher/child ratios, specialized curriculum, and community partnerships. At Thomas Center for Learning, we value the importance of character, commitment to the family, commitment to the community, respect for the individual, and celebrating our differences. We envision Healthy Families, Healthy Children, Healthy Schools, Healthy Communities in a Healthy World.

### **Philosophy**

Thomas Center for Learning's philosophy is based on a belief that physically active kids are more likely to be motivated, focused, and successful in school. Learning involves the whole body as the body is a tool for learning. Children need to be active participants in the learning process otherwise their learning experience is stale and they are passive learners. Learning must awaken the mind. Since movement promotes better use of the brain while it increases blood flow to the brain, our philosophy is rooted in the belief that mind-body connection activities improve learning skills. Children move to learn, but first, they must learn to move in a way that encourages them to sustain physically active lives that will last throughout adulthood.

### **The Staff**

The quality of the program is due to the quality of the staff. It is vital to attract staff that are experienced and knowledgeable in the field of early childhood. Each classroom is staffed with degreed teachers. Additional part-time staff float between rooms to offer additional support or coverage where needed.

Each staff person must receive 30 hours of continuing education in child development or special education each year. This requirement is over and above what state licensing regulations require and is crucial in maintaining qualified teachers for the ongoing success of the Thomas Center for Learning program. All teachers must have some level of experience with young children and demonstrate a genuine interest in children. All staff members must have an initial physical, TB test, criminal records check, child abuse clearance and a reference inquiry before employment begins.

### **Diversity & Inclusivity**

Thomas Center for Learning and Physical Literacy Development embraces a community of all cultures, races, ethnicities, religions, family structures, sexes and sexual orientations, gender identities and expressions, learning styles, and world views, among others. Our student community is admitted to all privileges, programs and activities available at our Center and does not discriminate in the administration of its educational and admissions policies. We oppose

discrimination and consciously recognize the value of diversity throughout our hiring practices, admission process, classroom composition, and professional development. Thomas Center for Learning calendar observes traditional American holidays. We discuss and present all holidays and customs in a non-religious manner.

## **General Safety Procedures for our Facility and Teachers**

### **Health Policy**

The Facility health policy will be evaluated regularly to reflect Covid-19 symptoms and new guidelines.

A temperature of 100.4° or above is considered a fever. A feverish student or teacher will not be admitted to the facility. If a fever occurs while a student is at our center, they will need to be picked up within one hour.

Do not send your child to our center on days when any one of the following symptoms are present, or if they have had any of these symptoms within a 24-hour period:

- Fever (temperature 100.4° and above) or chills\*
- Congestion or runny nose\*
- Diarrhea\*
- Nausea or vomiting\*
- Sore throat\*
- Cough\*
- Shortness of breath or difficulty breathing\*
- Fatigue\*
- Muscle or body aches\*
- Headache\*
- New loss of taste or smell\*
- Rash
- Discharge of discolored or profuse mucus from the nose
- Any contagious diseases

### **\*Covid-19 symptoms**

All communicable diseases must be reported to our center. A student must have an unmedicated temperature of 100° or below for 24 hours before returning to our center.

If a child or adult in the household is home sick with any of the Covid-19 symptoms, we require any siblings/children who also attend Thomas Center for Learning to stay home as well (it is likely the illness can spread since siblings are in close quarters at home). In order to be readmitted to our center, the student will need to present a doctor's note giving clearance or a negative covid test (taken within 24 hours).

**We ALL need to be vigilant for symptoms and communicating when someone becomes sick.**

A student must not have vomited for 24 hours before returning to our center.

A student must be free of diarrhea for 24 hours before returning to our center.

Weather permitting, outdoor play is a part of our daily schedule. A student too ill to participate in outdoor activities will not benefit from other learning activities and should remain at home until well.

Medication to be given during our center hours must be given to your child's teacher in its original container, along with signed and dated instructions stating the dosage, and the time it is to be administered.

### **Policy for Staying Home & Return to Our Facility After Illness**

Children must remain at home if they exhibit any of the symptoms listed in the health policy.

If a child's symptoms persist for 3+ days and/or if they are taken to a physician to evaluate their symptoms, our facility will require written confirmation from a doctor affirming that the child is healthy enough to return to school.

In all cases of illness, children must be symptom-free for 24 hours without medication to be admitted back into the classroom.

### **Promoting Health Accountability**

Students and staff will be required to strictly adhere to our facility health policy.

Students' temperatures will be taken at the time of drop-off, and again in the afternoon and will be logged in the Procure app. Teachers' temperatures will also be checked in the morning and afternoon.

The reporting of any possible Covid-19 exposure is required. A virtual health screening will be required. The quick and easy daily health screening will need to be completed via Procure before a student is admitted to the building.

All parents will be asked to remain outside our facility building unless there is an emergency. In the case of an emergency, parents will be required to wear a mask when entering our facility.

## **Increased Cleaning**

We are acutely aware of the importance of frequent and thorough disinfecting in and around our facility. We have professional deep cleans performed as needed, and check for effectiveness monthly.

Teachers have a daily list of necessary cleaning tasks and sanitizing procedures to keep shared materials, surfaces, and bathrooms germ-free.

## **Licensing and Accreditation**

Our facility is state-licensed and regularly inspected to ensure everything meets or exceeds standards, including child-to-teacher ratios and safe facilities. Thomas Center for Learning is subject to inspection by state and local health, fire, licensing, and building agencies.

Regulations and inspections pertain to staff qualifications, the facility and playground, nutrition, health and safety matters, record-keeping, and child-to-staff ratios. If you have any questions regarding licensing or regulations, please speak with the Program Director. Additionally, Thomas Center for Learning is seeking to be accredited by the National Association for the Education of Young Children (NAEYC) to earn recognition by Pennsylvania's Quality Rating Improvement System as a STAR 4 Facility, the highest rating on the scale.

### NAEYC Accreditation

Thomas Center for Learning is seeking to be recognized as a nationally accredited program through the National Association for the Education of Young Children (NAEYC). Accreditation means that Thomas Center for Learning met NAEYC's ten standards for high-quality early childhood education, has voluntarily undergone a comprehensive internal self-study, invited external professional review to verify compliance, and been found to comply with the Criteria. Thomas Center for Learning follows the NAEYC Code of Ethical Conduct; please go to [www.naeyc.org](http://www.naeyc.org). Copies of the Code of Ethical Conduct are also available in the main office, and all staff receive a copy. For more information about NAEYC, you can go to NAEYC for Families.

## Keystone STARS

The Keystone STAR levels are awarded based on a daycare center's quality standards in four essential areas. A center can achieve anywhere from STAR 1 to STAR 4 status. Star levels are based on quality standards in four key areas:

**Staff education** — early childhood teachers have the training and knowledge for working with young children.

**Learning environment** – the program has a variety of materials and activities for each age level that makes it possible for children to learn something new every day!

**Leadership and management** – a quality program has to have a sound business practice to ensure your child's safety and early learning.

**Family and community partnerships** - Parents and community members are encouraged to become a part of the child's learning.

## **Educational Programming**

### **Curriculum**

#### Physical Literacy

At Thomas Center for Learning, we focus on child-centered teaching, developmentally appropriate practices, and the belief that academic rigor and being physically active are equally important. Our goal is to instill a joy and enthusiasm for physical activities.

*“Physical literacy is the motivation, confidence, physical competence, knowledge, and understanding to value and take responsibility for engagement in physical activities for life.”*

(The International Physical Literacy Association,  
2014)

To support this goal, we developed our Physical Literacy curriculum based on the National Association of Physical Literacy:

<b>Standard 1</b> – The physically literate individual demonstrates competency in a variety of motor skills and movement patterns.
<b>Standard 2</b> – The physically literate individual applies knowledge of concepts, principles, strategies and tactics related to movement and performance.
<b>Standard 3</b> – The physically literate individual demonstrates the knowledge and skills to achieve and maintain a health-enhancing level of physical activity and fitness.
<b>Standard 4</b> – The physically literate individual exhibits responsible personal and social behavior that respects self and others.
<b>Standard 5</b> – The physically literate individual recognizes the value of physical activity for health, enjoyment, challenge, self-expression and/or social interaction.

Our curriculum is based on objectives for development and learning that focus on all the most critical areas for success as listed above. These objectives are built into every classroom activity, which means that the teacher helps your child develop skills and knowledge in these critical areas all day long. For more information about National Association of Physical Literacy visit: <http://naplusa.org/physical-literacy/physical-literacy-pe/>

### Second Step®

Second Step® is a social emotional learning (SEL) curriculum. Social-emotional learning helps students succeed in the classroom and throughout their lives. Children need social-emotional skills to thrive both in the classroom and in life. SEL concepts provide an extra dimension to education, focusing on improving cooperation, communication, and decision making. Relationships are the core of healthy brain development. Findings from one study report teachers feeling more strongly connected with the children in their care after implementing physical literacy activities, both in the playroom and outside. The results of this study are showing that active play every day not only develops children’s physical literacy, but also improves children’s relationships with educators and friends, their ability to regulate emotions and focus on tasks, and provides more opportunities to test their limits and build resilience. SEL is helpful to both children and adults, increasing self-awareness, academic achievement, and positive behaviors both in and out of the classroom. For more information about social-emotional learning and Second Step®, visit: <https://www.secondstep.org/>

## Assessment

### Desired Results Developmental Profile-School Age© 2010 (DRDP)

Child assessment is a vital component of all high-quality early childhood programs. Assessment is essential to understand and support young children's development. Thomas Center for Learning has selected two assessment programs to measure child outcomes.

DRDP is an ongoing observational assessment tool based upon years of feedback from thousands of educators and significant research about how children develop and learn. The system supports diverse learners from all backgrounds and family structures. It allows instructors and educators to actively observe students rather than testing them.

The Desired Results (DR) system is designed to improve the quality of programs and services provided to all children, from birth through 12 years of age who are enrolled in early care and education programs or before- and after school programs, and their families. The CDE's Special Education Division has developed an accessibility instrument known as DR access. Desired Results are defined as conditions of well-being for children and their families. Each Desired Result defines an overall outcome.

The DR system was developed based on the following six Desired Results:

#### **Desired Results for Children**

- DR 1: Children are personally and socially competent.
- DR 2: Children are effective learners.
- DR 3: Children show physical and motor competence.
- DR 4: Children are safe and healthy.

#### **Desired Results for Families**

- DR 5: Families support their child's learning and development.
- DR 6: Families achieve their goals.

All staff members are trained in the use of DRDP which includes the purpose and value of assessment and appropriate assessment tools. Thomas Center for Learning assessment policy adheres to the NAEYC Position Statement: Early Childhood Curriculum, Assessment, and Program Evaluation. For more information about DRDP: <https://www.desiredresults.us/about>

## FitnessGram®

The Cooper Institute developed the FitnessGram® assessment to measure student physical fitness levels. FitnessGram® assesses the physical fitness of a child based on the scientifically-established Healthy Fitness Zone® standards that indicate a lower risk of chronic diseases later in life. Students need daily physical activity to support healthy growth and cognitive development. We must continue to build an active school environment that supports daily physical activity, quality physical education, recess and sports participation. Students participating in the FitnessGram® assessment gain a better understanding of their own health-related fitness. Schools that include the FitnessGram® assessment in their physical education programs are better equipped to meet student fitness needs and teach healthy habits that will last well into the future. Rather than focusing on percentile norms, which rank students against each other, FitnessGram® focuses on criterion-referenced standards:

Healthy Fitness Zone	Needs Improvement	Health Risk
This Healthy Fitness Zone® indicates that the student is considered to be fit enough for good overall health. Most students who are regularly active should be able to score within or above the Healthy Fitness Zone on most FitnessGram® assessments.	This zone indicates a potential for future health risks if fitness doesn't improve. Increased activity as well as eating a healthy, controlled diet could delay or reverse this potential risk. Students in the Needs Improvement Zone will see messaging on their FitnessGram® Student Reports explaining how they can move into the Healthy Fitness Zone.	The Health Risk zone suggests that the student has a probability for future health problems if they don't improve their physical fitness. The need for increased activity and eating a healthy diet is more urgent for students in this category than those in the Needs Improvement Zone.

## Assessment Plan

- DRDP is used alongside informal classroom assessments such as written observations, work samples, and checklists and is built into our classroom activities.
- DRDP is structured around broad curriculum areas, including:
  - Language and Literacy Development: comprehension of oral language; expression of oral language; interest in literacy; decoding and word recognition; comprehension of written materials; writing.
  - Cognitive Development: cause and effect; problem solving; demonstrates inventiveness; memory and knowledge; pursuit of understanding; task persistence.
  - Mathematical Development: number sense of mathematical operations; measurement; shapes; time.
  - Physical Development: gross motor movement; fine motor skills.
- Initial enrollment and annual forms allow parents to provide information about their child that may assist the teacher when completing assessments.
- Children are assessed 3 times a year (Fall, Winter, Spring) using DRDP and 4 times a year using FitnessGram (Fall, Winter, Spring, Summer)
- FitnessGram ® is comprised of these health-related fitness components:
  - Aerobic Capacity: Aerobic capacity is evaluated using estimates of VO<sup>2</sup> max (also known as maximal oxygen uptake). VO<sup>2</sup> max reflects the maximum rate that the respiratory, cardiovascular, and muscular systems can take in, transport, and use oxygen during exercise.
  - Muscular Strength, Endurance & Flexibility: Muscular strength is the maximal force your muscles can exert in a single effort. Muscular endurance is the ability to sustain, or repeat muscular activity, over time. Flexibility describes the range of motion of muscles at the joint.
  - Body Composition: Body composition describes what part of total body weight is fat, and what part is fat free. Some body fat is needed for overall good health, but too much can lead to health problems, including high blood pressure, high cholesterol, type 2 diabetes and heart disease. Overweight youth are at a higher risk for becoming overweight adults. Therefore, by maintaining a healthy weight a child can potentially reduce their future risk of health problems.
- Children will be assessed in familiar spaces, and assessments will be conducted by adults the child is familiar with.

- Assessments will be conducted via observation during the natural course of the child's day.
- This may include during one on one, small group, or large group opportunities.

### Assessment results

- Teachers use the information gathered during the assessment process to:
  - Identify children's interests and needs
  - Be intentional in their teaching
  - Develop goals for each child and plan for individual student needs
  - Guide instructional/environmental planning that best meets the needs of all children
  - Share progress with families by pinpointing where children are along a continuum of development and education.
- Assessment results and developmental progress is shared with parents at their parent-teacher conferences.
- Suppose assessments indicate a need for further evaluation. In that case, the teachers will discuss this with the family and use the information gathered for referral to an outside agency for additional diagnostic screenings and assessments.

## Behavior Guideline Philosophy

Our foundational goal at Thomas Center for Learning is to help our students develop strong social and emotional skills. Instead of discipline, we use guidance. Guidance is about building an encouraging setting for every person in the group. It means helping young children understand they can learn from their mistakes, and it starts with showing them how (NAEYC). Research indicates that children with strong social-emotional skills tend to be happier, show greater motivation to learn, have a more positive attitude toward school, more eagerly participate in class activities, and demonstrate higher academic performance than students who exhibit social and emotional difficulties (Hyson 2004; Kostelnik et al. 2015).

Additionally, socially-emotionally healthy children are better able to establish and maintain positive relationships with adults and peers. To support our students in developing these skills, we take a proactive and preventive approach to guidance that reinforces appropriate behaviors rather than focusing on inappropriate behaviors.

- **Our Environment:** We provide children with exciting materials and engage them in activities that are appropriate for their age to keep them focused and attentive. We develop schedules that meet the needs of young children by avoiding long periods of wait time without activity. Yet, our schedule is flexible enough to follow the children's interests as well as their cognitive, physical, and biological needs.
- **Our Teachers:** We work to develop a strong rapport with each child speaking to children calmly, especially during redirections. We help children put words to their emotions. We use social stories to help teach our students healthy social skills. We strive to serve the individual needs of each child while ensuring the safety of young children.
- **Our Families:** We communicate regularly with families to ensure consistency in guidance between home and school. We partner with families to offer support, guidance and, if necessary, connect them with experts to help give their children the best foundation for academic and life success.

Hyson, M. 2004. *The Emotional Development of Young Children: Building an Emotion-Centered Curriculum*, 2nd ed. New York: Teachers College Press

Kostelnik, M.J., A.K. Soderman, A.P. Whiren, M.L. Rupiper, & K.M. Gregory. 2015. *Guiding Children's Social Development and Learning: Theory and Skills*, 8th ed. Stamford, CT: Cengage.

## Guidance Procedures

When any student at Thomas Center for Learning presents with challenging behavior, teaching staff shall follow the standards of the National Association for the Education of Young Children (NAEYC):

- Observe the children to identify events, activities, interactions, and other factors that predict and may contribute to challenging behavior.
- Teaching staff shall focus on teaching the child social, communication, and emotional regulation skills and using environmental modifications, activity modifications, adult or peer support, and other teaching strategies to support the child's appropriate behavior.
- Teaching staff shall respond to challenging behavior, including physical aggression, in a manner that provides for the child's safety and the safety of others in the classroom. Our response will be calm, respectful and give the child information on what is acceptable behavior and what is not.
- We will document the challenging behaviors and the intervention methods that were attempted in a log. Documentation may include incident reports, ABC charts, or Behavior Plans.
- Teacher-parent discussions regarding a child's behavior shall be held in private. They shall focus on working as a team to develop and implement an individualized plan that supports the child's inclusion and success.
- If necessary, intervention shall ensure each child has access to professional services, such as referrals to community agencies offering early intervention services, community mental health centers, and/or a private therapist.
- All discipline decisions will always be individualized, consistent, and appropriate to each child's understanding level.

**Thomas Center for Learning does not condone or tolerate the use of physical punishment of any kind on Thomas Center for Learning property. This policy restricts parents and staff from using physical punishment on their children while on Thomas Center for Learning property. Also, Thomas Center for Learning will not tolerate psychological abuse, coercion, threats, derogatory remarks, withholding, or threatening to withhold food as a form of discipline.**

Despite these efforts, some children may continue to exhibit significant, challenging behaviors. The following steps will be completed if a child must be removed for challenging behaviors that constitute an imminent danger to the child or others:

- Make a referral to an early childhood mental health specialist or Healthy Social Behavioral Initiative specialist through the Child Care Resource & Referral and refer to the agency responsible for early childhood special education services. If a child's behavior is such that it necessitates temporary removal on a repeated basis, there should be sufficient documentation for consideration of special education services.
- Maintain documentation on file of the incident's outcomes, subsequent parent conference, and the plan developed that includes appropriate intervention strategies. The parent conference's purpose is to create a plan jointly with the family and available resources to address the specific behaviors that constitute an imminent danger (recurring violence, behavior, or aggression)
- If a child continues to exhibit persistent, severe challenging behavior that is unsafe to themselves, other children, or the teachers, Thomas Center for Learning may recommend and/or require alternative placement.
- Suppose a child with an Individualized Family Service Plan (IFSP) or an Individualized Education Program (IEP) exhibits persistent challenging behaviors. In that case, special considerations are enacted due to procedural safeguards and due process rights ensured under the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA), Parts C and B. Thomas Center for Learning will follow all state special education rules and regulations governing suspension/expulsion.

## **Enrollment**

### **Admissions Process**

Children are eligible for admission at the age of 5 years old and are already enrolled in kindergarten. The admission process begins with a tour of our facility. Children are enrolled on a first-come, first-serve basis, depending on availability in the most developmentally appropriate class. Children are placed on an interest list if there is no availability in the most appropriate class.

Spaces are filled from the interest list according to the following priority system:

- Thomas Center for Learning staff children
- Rehoboth Gospel Assembly Church members
- Siblings of currently enrolled children
- Previous Thomas Center for Learning families
- General Public

Children must be able to benefit from participation in an inclusive group setting. If, after a tour and discussion of the child's needs, it is determined that Thomas Center for Learning is not a good fit for the child, Thomas Center for Learning will attempt to give resources and information about other programs that may benefit the child and family.

### **Registration & Requirements for Enrollment**

After parents are notified of the admission date, you must complete the Thomas Center for Learning Enrollment Application (found on our website).

Upon receipt of the enrollment application, the parent receives the fee agreement, family handbook, permission forms (photo/video, CACFP, sunscreen, walking/field trips), nutrition forms (if applicable), and health and immunization forms.

On the first day a child attends our program, the office must have in each child's file:

- A completed Fee Agreement
- Emergency Contact Form
- A completed set of enrollment paperwork

Within 30 days of a child's first date of attendance:

- A health assessment by a licensed physician
- A record of immunization or a completed exemption form
- CACFP Meal Benefit Income Eligibility Form

### **INFORMATION UPDATE**

The parent is responsible for notifying the Center of any change of pertinent information contained in the Registration forms. Simply indicate the information to be changed, and turn the sheet into the office.

The Center is responsible for obtaining current information on all enrollees, and it is impossible to do that without the help of our parents.

**PLEASE NOTE:** We are required to have each of these forms in our files in order to maintain our license to operate. State law requires us to exclude from our program any student whose files are incomplete until we have received their missing paperwork. We appreciate your cooperation.

### **Withdrawing**

If you need to withdraw your child from Thomas Center for Learning, you must give 2 weeks advance notice in writing. The 2 weeks' notice begins the day it is received in our program office. You will be charged tuition during this two-week notice period, whether your child is in attendance or not.

## **Dismissal from the Our Program**

We reserve the right to dismiss your child from our program enrollment if their behavior, or that of the parents, becomes unacceptable or disruptive. This includes non-compliance with the policies and procedures outlined in this document.

## **Hours of Operation**

Thomas Center for Learning is open from Monday through Friday, from 7:00 am to 5:30 pm during the school year.

## **Parking & Carpool**

To ensure our children's safety, it is of utmost importance that we practice safety and courtesy while in the parking lot. Please watch out for others, drive slowly, and hold children's hands.

If you are entering the building, please DO NOT hold the door open for others. The person behind you may not be a parent.

## **Arrival**

Mornings can be busy times, and they often set the tone for our day. Help your child have a successful start to their day by doing the following when you and your child arrive at our program:

- Sign your child in using the Procure App and your check-in code. There is a kiosk at the entrance, or you can use your smart device to check in.
- Students will be greeted at the door by one of their classroom teachers, their temperature will be taken, and they will be escorted to their classroom entrance. The virtual health screening questionnaire will need to be completed at the time of drop-off. They will be asked to wash their hands before putting away their belongings.
- You must connect with the teacher upon your child's arrival. This is a wonderful opportunity to share any important information they should know about your child's morning or changes to their schedule.

Please plan to bring your child to our program by 9:30 am during full days at the center. We want each of our students to gain the most they can from their experiences at Thomas Center for Learning. When children consistently arrive late, they miss out on educational opportunities and fun activities that the teachers have carefully planned.

## Absences, Sick Days & Vacations

For children to learn from our program, they need to be here on a regular basis. As participants in the Child Care Works Subsidized Child Care Program managed by ELRC, we must record attendance.

- Please notify your child's teacher or Program Director if you know that your child will be out of our program ahead of time for an appointment or vacation. If your child is sick, please notify us as soon as you can. You can send all notifications to your child's teacher via messaging within the Procure app.
- If your child has been absent two days in a row for unknown reasons, a staff member will touch base with you to check in and ensure the child is well and when to expect their return.

### **Classroom Schedule**

Please see the before and after school day schedule and the full day schedule.

Our schedule is subject to change.

#### *Before and After School*

**7:00 am** Arrival & Quiet Activities  
**7:30 am** Breakfast  
**8:00 am** Bus Transportation to School  
\*\*\*  
**3:00 pm** Arrival & Snack  
**3:30 pm** Journal | Homework | Small Group  
**4:00 pm** Outdoor Play  
**4:30 pm** Quiet Activities & Classroom Jobs  
**5:00 pm** Free Choice Time  
**5:30 pm** Departure

#### *Full Day*

**7:00 am** Arrival & Quiet Activities  
**7:30 am** Breakfast  
**8:00 am** Free Choice | Small Group  
**10:00 am** Large Group  
**11:00 am** Free Choice | Small Group  
**12:00 pm** Lunch  
**1:00 pm** Playground | Nature Walk  
**2:00 pm** Free Choice  
**3:00 pm** Snack  
**3:30 pm** Journal Writing | Homework | Reading Buddies  
**4:00 pm** Outdoor Play  
**4:30 pm** Quiet Activities & Classroom Jobs  
**5:00 pm** Activity of the Day | Free Choice  
**5:30 pm** Departure

Staff is sensitive to the attention spans of young children and plan accordingly, making activities extensive enough to be challenging and fun but short enough to avoid overwhelming a child. Each classroom has a schedule posted that lists approximate times of activities. Routine provides security, but flexibility is also important in meeting the varying needs of young children.

### **Classroom Activities**

Teachers plan activities for the learning centers in the classrooms weekly. Teachers strive to be culturally aware and sensitive in their approach to planning. They plan concrete activities that can be modified to meet all children's needs and provide challenges in skill development.

The classrooms are organized into centers or defined interest areas. Activities are planned for each center in which the children move freely throughout each day. The variety of learning centers include art, science/discovery, engineering/blocks, math, literacy/library, puzzles, board games, and dramatic play.

### Homework Policy

Homework time is scheduled during the After School Program in addition to other activities. During this time staff members are available to answer homework questions and provide help. The homework area will be kept silent to help the student's concentration. We do not guarantee that all homework is completed or correct. You and your child should review their homework at home.

You can help your child make sure their homework is a success.

1. Remind your child of your expectations regarding homework
2. Let them know that if they say that they have no homework an alternate assignment will be given to them
3. Remind your child to bring their homework with them from class to our after-school program
4. Encourage your child to ask for help from staff when they need it
5. Please remind your child that homework time is quiet time

### Learning Experiences

Teachers connect with and use their community's resources and the families we serve to expand our curriculum and provide additional hands-on learning experiences. In-house learning events may include cultural experiences through community members as well as a cultural experience provided by families within the center, demonstrations by community helpers, or scientific investigations. Due to Covid-19, most of our in-house learning experiences are virtual.

### **Visiting & Observing**

#### **Observing Your Child**

At this time, parents may not observe their children in-person. We intend to limit the presence of non-essential visitors in the building in order to mitigate the spread of germs. We are happy to arrange a way for you to observe your child via video conferencing.

#### **Participation in Your Child's Class**

At this time, we will not be accommodating any special visits from parents or outside programs at the school.

As mentioned above, we intend to limit the presence of non-essential people in the building.

## **Play Yard and Outdoors**

We play outside every day that weather permits. According to the Pennsylvania Department of Human Services (DHS) Certification Regulations, Children are expected to go outside when the forecast temperature/wind chill are above 25 degrees, the forecast temperature/heat index is less than 90 degrees, there is no precipitation falling, and there is no current air quality alert.

When the weather keeps us inside, we find safe and fun ways to get active indoors. Our playground equipment and materials are designed for active play and exploration, which keeps kids learning while getting exercise and fresh air. Teachers plan outdoor activities to address multiple areas of skill development, including climbing, balance, and coordination, throwing, kicking, running and jumping.

## **Mealtimes**

Healthy, balanced meals are just what growing bodies need! Breakfast, lunch, and afternoon snacks are provided to all students. Weekly menus are displayed on our parent board, the Procure app and available upon request.

Additionally, all meals are served and prepared following the Child and Adult Care Food Program/USDA requirements for children ages five years to twelve years. This includes one protein, one grain, two fruits and/or vegetables, and milk at lunch. Breakfast and snacks include one grain and a fruit or vegetable.

It has been the experience at Thomas Center for Learning that children will eventually try foods at school that they may not consume at home simply because the other children are eating them. During mealtimes, students and staff are sitting together and engaging in conversations. Staff uses positive reinforcement to encourage children to try new foods.

## **Special Dietary Needs**

We can provide allergy-friendly alternatives with documentation from a doctor for students with food allergies or intolerances. We encourage all students to eat the meals provided at our program; however, we understand that may not be the best option for all students.

We ask that you not send snack foods, candy, or gum with your child as this can cause difficulties within the classroom. OUTSIDE FOOD POLICY- Outside Food is not permitted in our facility.

For children with disabilities who have special feeding needs, program staff keeps a daily record documenting the type and quantity of food a child consumes and provides families with that information.

## Personal Belongings

To prevent items from becoming misplaced or lost, please label ALL items brought from home with your child's name. Within each classroom, each child has a hook and/or cubby assigned to them. This will provide storage space for your child's personal belongings. Children are responsible for keeping this storage space clean and organized.

### Clothing & Shoes

A full day at our center includes fun activities like singing, painting, playing indoors and out, dancing, and eating, so we recommend easy-fitting, washable clothes. Being comfortable lets kids focus on learning and having fun!

Make sure your child is wearing shoes for easy movement. Flip-flops, clogs, cowboy boots, and slick-bottomed shoes often cause children to fall when running outside and limit their play. Please be sure that your child's shoes are rubber-soled and closed-toe with a closed heel or heel strap. Shoes are required for all students.

- Please provide two complete sets of extra clothes, including socks, for your child. It's always a good idea to keep an extra pair of shoes and a sweater or sweatshirt at our center, too. Clothing should be labeled with your child's first and last name and checked periodically to make sure it still fits.
- Please provide appropriately layered clothing to keep warm in cold weather, including mittens or gloves, caps, hoods, or hats, sweaters or sweatshirts, socks, and warm, waterproof outerwear and footwear.
- Please have your children wear sun-protective clothing such as clothing made with fabrics rated for ultraviolet protection or clothing that protects skin areas most prone to sun damage.
- Sometimes learning and fun can get messy! Thomas Center for Learning isn't responsible for lost, stained, soiled, or torn clothing.

### Belongings from Home

Personal belongings such as electronic games, cell phones, CD players, mp3 players, trading cards, etc., are **not allowed** in the After School Program. Thomas Center for Learning, Founder, Program Director, Staff are not responsible for lost or stolen items.

### **Toys**

All students are asked to please leave their toys at home.

Toy weapons (guns, water pistols, swords, shields, or other items that resemble weapons) are not permitted at Thomas Center for Learning. All personal electronics (except augmentative

communication devices) brought to our facility must be stored in the “off” position in the child’s cubby. Use of personal electronics is not permitted in the classroom. We cannot assume responsibility for lost or damaged personal belongings.

### **Change in Pickup Person**

The safety of our students is our top priority. Please notify your child’s teacher if someone other than you will be picking up your child. Thomas Center for Learning staff will only release your child to the parents and guardians or the other adults you authorized on the student’s Enrollment Application and Emergency Contact Form. If you need to authorize a new pickup person, please send the request via phone call during which a staff person will complete a VERBAL REQUEST FOR RELEASE OF CHILD form. For your child’s safety, any time a person we do not recognize comes to pick up your child, we will ask for a government-issued photo ID and make a copy for the child’s file.

### **Departure**

It is important to sign your child in and out each day. You can sign your child out via the Procure app at the front entrance kiosk or on your smartphone, like signing in upon arrival. It’s also critical that you check in with your child’s teachers before leaving. Our facility closes at 5:30 pm sharp. A late pick-up fee of \$1.00 per minute will be assessed when a child is left beyond the center’s operating hours. The late pick-up fee does not constitute an agreement to provide after-hours service. If you believe you will arrive after 5:30 pm, please alert your child’s teacher or the director via the Procure app or phone call as soon as possible. In this case, the late fee rate still applies. Failure to pick up your child or contact Thomas Center for Learning, and if you or another authorized emergency contact cannot be reached within 15 minutes after closing time, Thomas Center for Learning staff will contact the local authorities.

### **Custodial & Foster Care**

Some families have legal custodial orders that address who is permitted to pick up or visit a child. If there are custody orders or protection orders relating to your child, a copy must be provided to Thomas Center for Learning for your child’s file. This information is confidential and solely for the safety and well-being of your child. Families must update the Program Director when custody orders change or expire. Please note that employees cannot be responsible for supervising parenting time (visitation), and, as a result, visitation for non-custodial parents is not permitted in our centers.

For enrolled children in the foster care system, Thomas Center for Learning will need to receive a copy of the foster care paperwork. Thomas Center for Learning will release the child only to the foster parents or the child’s caseworker, who must sign the child in and out on the visitor’s list and provide proper identification. The caseworker must verify any additions or changes in writing (by letter or fax).

## **Communication and Staying Informed**

Because teachers are not available to speak on the telephone during class time, we ask that you refer to the contact information, and either email them or call and leave a message. Your question or concern will be addressed as soon as possible.

## **Parent/Teacher Conferences**

Individual parent/teacher conferences are held in the fall, winter and again in the spring. You may meet with your child's teacher at any other time by appointment. We encourage communication between parent, teacher, and our director any time a question, concern, or problem arises. At this time, we plan to hold conferences virtually.

## **Procare**

We use Procare to:

- Enter Student Attendance & Meals
- Manage enrollment and invoicing
- Send alerts, reminders, and messages to parents
- Log student temperatures twice a day
- Collect daily responses to a virtual health screening

You may access Procare from the web, and there is also, conveniently, an app that you can download to your iOS or Android device.

**You will be invited to join Procare via text or email. Once you receive the invitation, follow these easy steps:**

1. Download the free iPhone/iPad or Android app, or sign up on Web
2. Choose Sign Up, then Parent
3. Click "Add Child" and enter the unique 10-character code (the code will expire in one week)

Once signed up, you'll be able to receive photos, videos, messages, and updates about your child's daily activities. Anytime your child is dropped off or picked up, you'll know. You can also set up automatic online billing once your school is set up.

Learn more about Procare by visiting: <https://help.procareconnect.com/en/>

## **The School Year**

### **Program Calendar**

You will be provided a calendar upon enrollment. Thomas Center for Learning will be closed most federal holidays. We also dedicate time each year for professional development. This includes 2 professional development days. Thomas Center for Learning maintains the right to change the calendar at any time. Tuition and fees are not prorated for illness, holidays, inclement weather, or emergency closures.

### **Holiday Closure Days**

- New Year's Eve & New Year's Day
- Martin Luther King, Jr.
- President's Day
- Good Friday
- Memorial Day
- Independence Day
- Labor Day
- Thanksgiving Day & the day after Thanksgiving Day
- Winter Holiday Recess (December 24th - January 2nd)

### **Inclement Weather Days**

In case of inclement weather, Thomas Center for Learning will close as determined by the School District of Philadelphia.

- If the School District of Philadelphia is CLOSED, Thomas Center for Learning WILL BE CLOSED.
- If the School District of Philadelphia is opening on a 2-hour delay, Thomas Center for Learning WILL OPEN AT 8:00 am.

### **Celebrations & Birthdays**

Celebrations and birthdays are special days for kids, and we want to share in the fun! If you'd like to provide a small treat for the celebration, all items must be nut-free (including peanuts, tree nuts, peanut butter, and food processed in plants using nuts) and commercially packaged with ingredient statements so we can be sure we're accommodating any allergies or dietary restrictions. Please do not send in any treats or candy, which may be a choking hazard to our students. Healthy snack options such as whole-grain items, vegetables with dip, fresh fruit, fresh fruit popsicles, or yogurt are always a great choice. Please be sure to provide enough for everyone in your child's classroom and check in with your child's teacher before the special day so they can share any tips and plan accordingly.

## **Communication & Family Involvement**

### **Conferences**

Family participation is encouraged and welcomed. Thomas Center for Learning uses Family Conferences to offer family support and communication. Family Conferences are designed:

- To guide families and teachers with a way of sharing valuable information about their child.
- To individualize the planning process for each child in the context of their family, culture, and community.
- To explore ways to use a child's family's strengths to promote growth and development.
- To create an ongoing process for recording the growth and development of the child.

We schedule 2 formal conferences each school year, but we encourage you to reach out to your child's teacher at any time if you have questions, concerns, or want an update on your child's progress. While conferences are not mandatory, they are encouraged, even for our youngest students, as they allow parents the opportunity to follow the progress that their child is making. During these conferences, you will be provided with a written report about your child's strengths and areas for growth.

### **Developmental Concerns**

If at any point you have developmental concerns for your child, please reach out to your child's teacher to discuss. We are happy to provide strategies, resources, or community programs that may be of support.

### **Family Support**

While Thomas Center for Learning specializes in providing high-quality early childhood education, we recognize that our students and families may have needs outside early education. We have a variety of ways that we can support our families. These include:

- Assist families with locating community resources
- Help families obtain emergency assistance in areas such as food, clothing, utilities, housing, and counseling
- Assist families with a successful transition to school
- Access to a Family Resource Lending Library

Please reach out to the Program Director if you are in need of support.

## **Home Language**

It is important to Thomas Center for Learning that all families are given the opportunity to fully understand, interpret, and become involved in their child's education. Thomas Center for Learning will work with the family to provide information in the language they are most comfortable with for any family that makes a request.

## **Confidentiality**

All information contained in your child's records, including your personal information, is confidential. Anyone who is not directly involved in the care of your child or affiliated with Pennsylvania Department of Human Services protective services, or other government agencies will not have access to your child's records without your written authorization or court order. All Thomas Center for Learning staff members and contracted therapists must sign a Statement of Assurance of Confidentiality upon employment and annually after that.

As a parent or guardian, you can request access to your child's records; to do so, please email the Program Director. If you withdraw your child from the center, we will maintain your child's records for at least three years per Commonwealth of Pennsylvania Office of Administration regulation. Lastly, out of respect for other children and families, please do not post photos or videos that contain images of children other than your own on the Internet.

All Thomas Center for Learning employees are expected to treat all children and families with respect and dignity. In return, we expect the same from all of our families. If difficulties arise, we encourage families to share their concerns with the Program Director verbally or in writing. Inappropriate language directed toward staff and/or in front of children will not be tolerated. Through communication, we will work to resolve the issue. If you are not satisfied with the solution, we encourage you to contact the Program Director. Please do not confront children or other parents in our program. When any member of the Thomas Center for Learning community shows behavior that threatens the safety of others or shows repeated disrespect towards other members of our community, Thomas Center for Learning reserves the right to ask the family in question to leave the facility immediately and terminate that child's enrollment at Thomas Center for Learning.

## Tuition & Fees

### Tuition

We know that your child's early education is important and doesn't come without a price. Paying tuition on time helps ensure that we can continue to retain our highly trained teachers and provide them a positive work experience. Information about current tuition rates is available on our website. Tuition increases may occur annually and typically reflect a market rate and cost-of-living increase. All tuition is due in advance of services provided and in accordance with your tuition agreement.

The best way to pay tuition and fees is online through Procure. Tuition balances will generally be posted as an invoice on the app. Through Procure, you can make recurring or one-time payments online using a checking or savings account. If you choose to use a credit card, a processing fee will be added to your payment. Thomas Center for Learning is committed to the security of your personal information online. Procure payment services do not store confidential banking information and have the highest encryption levels on bank transfers. No one at our company or externally has any access to any customer banking records. All families using Procure for payment may have to complete a two-step authentication process to verify their accounts. If online payment is not possible for you, please talk to the Program Director about alternate payment methods.

Our Before and After School Program operates 7:00 am - 5:30 pm, Monday through Friday from September to June of each school year. Full-Time care tuition is \$200.00/week per child.\* Part-Time care Tuition is \$175.00 per week per child. Tuition is due and payable on Monday or on your child's first scheduled program day of each week by 5:30 pm. A delinquency fee is charged in the amount of \$25 per day. The state and federal governments have made funding available to assist qualifying families pay for their child care fees through the subsidized child care program. Find out if you are eligible by clicking [here](#) or typing <https://www.dhs.pa.gov/Services/Children/Pages/Child-Care-Works-Program.aspx> into your browser. For eligible families, that program pays a portion to the child care provider and the family pays a co-pay.

We accept all major credit cards and payment via our online family portal and website. We also accept cashier's checks and money orders.

We strive to take the needs and problems of our families into consideration, we must maintain financial stability. Accounts 3 times in arrears or repeated failure to pay tuition by the due date may result in the termination of services. Any requests for exceptions must be made with the Program Director through the completion of a tuition payment plan. A late fee will be assessed on any account that has not been paid in full by the 19th of the month unless these arrangements have been made. Upon enrollment at Thomas Center for Learning, all families will be expected to sign a statement that they have read, understand, and will abide by the tuition/fee agreement.

## **Child Care Payment Receipts**

Receipts can be printed out via your Procure payment portal for employer reimbursement or tax purposes. Instructions can be found [here](#).

## **Family Discounts**

Families with more than one child enrolled full-time receive 10 % off the youngest child's tuition.

## **Temporary Withdrawal**

On a case-by-case basis, Thomas Center for Learning may be able to work with families who wish to withdraw their child for ten weeks or less (i.e., summer, or due to an extended trip outside the country). If this is the case, you must send the request in writing to the Program Director at least 3 weeks in advance. To guarantee the child's space upon return, 50% of the tuition that would typically be due during that time frame must be paid. If tuition fees are not paid promptly, the child's space will not be held, and re-registration will be required upon return.

## **Health & Safety**

We all know that safety comes first! At Thomas Center for Learning, our first goal is to keep children safe, which starts with paying attention to every detail - big and small. Every day at our center, you can be confident that your child is in the very best hands.

## **Daily Health Checks**

Each morning when your child arrives, we will conduct a daily health check. This is a quick physical observation where we check and observe a child's behavior/mood and physical condition, including breathing, skin, eyes, ears, nose, and mouth. Additionally, we ask that you please alert us of anything out of the ordinary we need to know regarding sleep, appetite, bowel movements and urination, mood, and behavior at home and/or unusual events. This also includes of COVID-19 symptoms screening and temperature check upon arrival to our center.

## **Illness Policy**

We realize that it is difficult for working parents to keep their children home, but exclusion from the facility will help prevent contagion and promote the health and safety of your child. Children should be kept home from school if they are feverish, have diarrhea and/or vomiting, have nasal mucous discharge that isn't clear, or if they show signs of becoming sick (listlessness/drowsiness, productive cough, sore throat, ear pain, eyes that are pink, burning, itching, or producing discharge). **See exclusion criteria on the following pages for more specifics.** If your child cannot comfortably participate in the day's usual activities or your child needs to stay indoors and/or have additional rest, these signs are generally indicative that the child should not be at school.

Thomas Center for Learning has established guidelines in accordance with state child care law and other best practices concerning sick children. In case of a communicable disease or condition, and at the discretion of the Program Director, other parents will be notified to watch for symptoms in their children.

If your child becomes ill during the school day, every effort will be made to make them comfortable, away from the other children, but with a familiar caregiver. A parent will immediately be called to come and pick them up. Thomas Center for Learning is not able to provide arrangements to care for sick children. Parents are required to respond as soon as possible concerning the sick child when contacted by Thomas Center for Learning staff. If we cannot reach the parent within thirty minutes, we will reach out to the family's emergency contacts as stated on enrollment/annual forms. If the illness warrants, the child's pediatrician will be contacted for consultation.

Children may attend with minor illnesses if it is not contagious, and it does not affect the child's ability to participate in the day's routine. Minor illnesses include:

- Mild respiratory infections
- Acute infections subsiding after treatment, such as pink eye, impetigo, ear infections
- Cold symptoms without a fever

If the child's health deteriorates at some point in the day, the parent will be contacted to come to pick them up.

**It is always helpful if you can provide Thomas Center for Learning a doctor's note, when applicable.**

### **Medications**

Whenever possible, we recommend that you administer medications at home. To help with medication scheduling, you may consider asking your health care provider for prescriptions with 12-hour dosages. At the center, medications will be administered in accordance with Pennsylvania Department of Human Services regulations and the policies described below.

## General Medication Policies

- No prescription or over-the-counter medication and no topical, non-medical ointment, repellent, lotion, cream, or powder shall be administered to any child:
  - a) without written authorization from the child's parent
  - b) without written instructions from the child's parent, physician, or another health professional
  - c) in any manner not authorized by the child's parent, physician, or another health professional
  - d) after its expiration date
  - e) or non-medical reasons, such as to induce sleep
  - f) with a known allergy to the medication.
- All medications will be given following the doctor's written instructions.
- Medication will be stored separately for each child.
- Medications will be stored in a locked cabinet in the classroom or locked box in the Center refrigerator, depending on the medication. Medications for external use will be stored separately from medications for internal use.
- Do not store medication in diaper bags, lunch bags, backpacks, or any other personal belongings.
- We do not mix the medication with food, formula, or juice, nor will we dispense any medication in a bottle or cup.
- Medications will be administered by regular classroom staff who have been trained in medication administration in the presence of another staff person. All staff follow the Six Rights of Safe Medication Administration: right child, right medicine, right date/time, right dose, right route & right documentation. Staff will document each dosage on the medication form, listing time, amount given, and initial. If any side effects are noticed, they will be noted on the form, and the child's parent will be notified.
- Medication forms will be added to the child's file after the medication request is completed. Forms for long-term medication will be considered confidential and treated as such.
- It is the responsibility of the parent to remove or dispose of any medication after the duration of the request has ended. The classroom staff will dispose of any medicine at

the Center after the medication form has expired or after a child has left Thomas Center for Learning.

- Alternative medications, such as herbal or homeopathic medications that are not tested by the US Food and Drug Administration for safety or effectiveness, lack safety information and cannot be administered at Thomas Center for Learning.
- Thomas Center for Learning reserves the right to refuse the administration of medications if we feel that it is in the best interest of the staff.

### Prescription Medication

- For a staff member to administer any medication to your child, you must complete the Medication Administration Permission Form in its entirety.
- The medication must be brought to school and stored in the original, tamper-resistant container in which they were dispensed with the pharmacy labels. The pharmacy label must specify:
  - The child's name
  - The names of the medication
  - The amount and frequency of dosage
  - The date the prescription was filled and the expiration date
- If the medication is provided via pharmaceutical samples; they must be stored in the manufacturer's original packaging, shall be labeled with the child's name, and shall be accompanied by written instructions specifying:
  - a) The child's name
  - b) The names of the medication
  - c) The amount and frequency of dosage
  - d) The signature of the prescribing physician or other health professional the date the instructions were signed by the physician or other health professional
  - e) Medication expiration date
- The medication shall be administered only to the child for whom they were prescribed. It shall be administered according to the prescription, using the amount and frequency of dosage specified on the label.
- A parent's written authorization for administering a prescription medication shall be valid for the length of time the medication is prescribed to be taken or up to 6 months when needed for a chronic medical condition, whichever is less.

### Emergency Medication

If your child requires the use of emergency medications (i.e., inhalers, Epi-pen, Diastat, etc.), you will need to complete the corresponding medical action plan. Blank medical action plans may be found with the Program Director in the main office, and these plans MUST have a doctor or healthcare professional's signature. Emergency medicines will be kept unlocked and easily accessible to adults but out of children's reach (at least 5 feet off the ground). This is to ensure easy access in the case of an emergency. All staff members have trained on emergency medication administration annually. We work with a county nurse to ensure our staff is appropriately trained for your child's specific medical needs.

### Over-the-Counter Medication

In general, Thomas Center for Learning staff will not administer over-the-counter medication except when a health professional prescribes the over-the-counter medicines. This situation is most common for chronic health conditions (ex: Benadryl for students with allergy action plans or fever-reducing medication for students with febrile seizure action plans). Thomas Center for Learning will not administer over-the-counter medicines such as cough syrup, Tylenol, ibuprofen, antibiotic cream for abrasions, or medication for upset stomach in the cases of acute illness or pain. Children that have these symptoms may need to remain at home until they are symptom-free.

The over-the-counter medication must be brought to school and stored in the manufacturer's original packaging with the child's name written or labeled on it. It shall be accompanied by a Medication Administration Permission Form that specifies:

- a) The child's name
- b) The medical conditions or allergic reactions
- c) The names of the authorized over-the-counter medication
- d) The amount and frequency of the dosages, which shall not exceed the amount and frequency of the dosages on the manufacturer's label
- e) In cases where the prescription says, "as needed" (i.e., allergy exposure, etc.), the instructions need to specify criteria for the administration of the medication (be specific with what symptoms or situations are criteria for administration)
- f) The route in which the medication shall be administered
- g) Possible reactions or side effects
- h) The signature of the parent AND physician, or another health professional
- i) The date the instructions were signed by the parent and physician or other health professional.

## **Topical Creams and Sunscreen**

Thomas Center for Learning provides generic drugstore brand, over the counter sunscreen (SPF 15, CVS or Rite Aid brand) to all students. Please apply sunscreen to your child before arriving at the center and dress them in hats/visors and tightly woven clothing to help prevent sunburn during outdoor play. Thomas Center for Learning staff can reapply sunscreen in the afternoon before going outside if we have an up-to-date Sunscreen Permission Form on file. If you prefer your child, use a different sunscreen in the afternoon, please complete the over-the-counter topical medications form.

## **Medical Report & Immunization Record**

A record of immunizations and a children's medical report must be completed and on file at school within the first 30 days of each child's first day of attendance. Records should also include results of any screenings, prescribed medications, descriptions of any allergies, and current or chronic health conditions. If an immunization and medical report are not on file within 30 days of the child's first day of attendance, your child will not be allowed to attend the facility.

As the child receives new immunizations, the date and type of shot or immunization should be reported to administration to be added to the child's record. Immunizations may be obtained either through the pediatrician or the local health department. A schedule of immunizations can be acquired through the Center office. See <http://www.cdc.gov/vaccines/> for the current national immunization schedule.

## **Cleaning & Sanitation**

Cleaning and disinfecting are part of our broad approach to preventing infectious diseases at Thomas Center for Learning. Contaminated toys are specifically washed, sanitized, and air-dried. All surfaces and toys are sanitized and air-dried daily upon arrival and departure. For more specifics about the frequency and type of cleaning that occurs for each surface at Thomas Center for Learning, please reference the [NAEYC Cleaning, Sanitizing, and Disinfecting Frequency Table](#).

## **Hand Washing**

Handwashing has long been established as one of the most important things to prevent the spread of illness.

In our facility, hand washing requirements for staff are as follows:

- Upon arrival at school/center
- Before and after setting up snacks/food for student consumption
- Before and after helping students use the bathroom

- After handling items soiled with body fluids such as blood, drool, urine, stool, or discharge from nose or eyes
- After handling an ill child
- After using the bathroom or taking care of other personal needs (i.e., nose-wiping) and eating

In our school, hand-washing requirements for students are as follows:

- Upon arrival in the morning
- After using the bathroom
- Before and after eating food
- Before and after sensory play
- After they have touched a child who may be sick or who has handled soiled items
- After blowing/wiping their nose

The required method for handwashing is as follows:

- Rub hands vigorously for at least 20 seconds using warm water and soap.
- Wash between fingers and back of hands and wrists.
- Rinse hands well under running water and dry thoroughly with a clean paper towel.
- Turn off water using a paper towel instead of bare hands. This helps prevent acquiring new germs on already clean hands.

### **Universal Precautions**

Thomas Center for Learning follows universal precautions to prevent the transmission of HIV/Aids, Hepatitis B, and other bloodborne pathogens. Universal precautions refer to infection control measures that all healthcare workers and childcare providers follow to protect themselves and the children in their care from disease-producing microorganisms. The concept requires workers to treat all blood and various other bodily fluids as infected with HIV, hepatitis B virus, and other bloodborne pathogens. Thomas Center for Learning staff follow the following universal precautions when encountering blood or bodily fluids:

1. Gloves are worn for contact with blood, body fluids, mucous membranes, open wounds, and handling items or surfaces soiled with blood or body fluids. Only approved latex or vinyl gloves are worn. Gloves are never to be washed and reused.
2. Hands and other skin areas are washed thoroughly if they contact blood or body fluids. Hands should be washed immediately after gloves are removed.
3. Saliva is not considered by the Center for Disease Control to transmit HIV. Still, it is a body fluid, and mouth-to-mask ventilation devices will be available for resuscitation and shall be used by trained personnel.
4. Staff must review information and procedures about universal precautions, HIV/HBV infections/transmissions, and handling of infectious waste annually.

## **Safety**

### Active Supervision

Thomas Center for Learning staff assume responsibility for enrolled children when they enter the classroom or are escorted by a staff member onto the Thomas Center for Learning property. Active supervision requires focused attention and intentional observation of children at all times. Staff position themselves so that they can observe all of the children: watching, counting, and listening at all times. During transitions, staff account for all children with name-to-face recognition by visually identifying each child. They also use their knowledge of each child's development and abilities to anticipate what they will do, then get involved and redirect them when necessary. This constant vigilance helps children learn safely.

### Strategies We Use to Put Active Supervision in Place

The following strategies allow children to explore their environments safely. Children must be directly supervised at all times. This includes daily routines such as sleeping, eating, and diapering or bathroom use. Programs that use active supervision take advantage of all available learning opportunities and never leave children unattended.

### Set Up the Environment

Staff set up the environment so that they can supervise children and be accessible at all times. When activities are grouped together and furniture is at waist height or shorter, adults are always able to see and hear children. Small spaces are kept clutter-free and big spaces are set up so that children have clear play spaces that staff can observe.

### Position Staff

Staff carefully plan where they will position themselves in the environment to prevent children from harm. They place themselves so that they can see and hear all of the children in their care. They make sure there are always clear paths to where children are playing, sleeping, and eating so they can react quickly when necessary. Staff stay close to children who may need additional support. Their location helps them provide support, if necessary.

### Scan and Count

Staff are always able to account for the children in their care. They continuously scan the entire environment to know where everyone is and what they are doing. They count the children frequently. This is especially important during transitions when children are moving from one location to another.

All classrooms monitor attendance by updating their attendance records throughout the day and counting and matching the numbers of children present with names on attendance records. "Name to Face" headcounts occur throughout the day, particularly when moving about the center at every threshold.

### Injuries/Accidents

Your child's safety is of our utmost concern, but we recognize that minor bumps and scrapes are an everyday part of your child exploring and learning through experience. Known minor injuries sustained at our facility are reported to parents on an Incident Report Form, of which you will receive a copy. If your child is injured in our care, our first step is to administer first aid. A first aid kit is available in the office, and each class always has a small first aid kit with them. The most common treatment is ice on bumps, soap and water cleansing, and a bandage on a minor wound. All permanent staff members are trained in First Aid and Infant/Child CPR within the first 90 days of their employment, and they must maintain their current certification every two years.

If an accident is more than minor, a parent will be called to discuss the need for possible medical treatment. If the accident is more serious, a parent will be contacted and requested to come immediately. In the event of a life-threatening illness or injury, an ambulance will be called. To ensure your child's safety, your Enrollment Agreement provides a record of names, addresses, and phone numbers of the people you have authorized to pick up your child. We ask you to keep this information current and supply names and phone numbers for your child's doctor and preferred hospital.

## Emergency Procedures

We make every effort to be prepared for potential emergencies. Thomas Center for Learning has an emergency response plan for fire, inclement weather, or if a lockdown becomes necessary. This plan is updated annually and submitted to the Philadelphia Police Department. These plans are reviewed annually with the staff. Additional precautions we take in the event of an emergency are:

- Emergency phone numbers are posted by all phones.
- Thomas Center for Learning keeps an emergency “To-Go” bag in the main office with first aid supplies and emergency contact information for all students and staff.
- Fire drills are practiced once each month, and shelter-in-place drills every three months to prepare children in the case of an emergency.
- Emergency evacuation plans are posted in each room.
- Annual inspections by a Philadelphia fire inspector. If an emergency requires evacuation, we’ll notify you as soon as the children have been relocated to a safe area.

## **Mandated reporting requirements**

It’s our mission to ensure all children in our center are safe and well cared for, not only while they are at our center, but at all times. Pennsylvania law requires everyone who works directly with children to report suspicions or evidence of child neglect or abuse to local law enforcement. Those who fail to report can be held accountable under the law. The law prohibits interference with an individual’s attempt to report child abuse or neglect. Our facility will offer full cooperation during the investigation of the reported incident.

- Should a staff member have reason to suspect abuse, they will contact Thomas Center for Learning administration and follow up with an immediate phone call to Childline—Pennsylvania Department of Human Services. If an administrative staff member is unavailable, staff members have the authority to make the call and to prepare a written report of the account.
- Thomas Center for Learning will not hire a person who has been convicted of abuse of any type, and all staff undergo a fingerprint and criminal background check before employment begins.
- All staff members are responsible for protecting all children from abuse from any child or staff member.
- All staff members are required to report any suspected cases of abuse, whether it is suspected at Thomas Center for Learning or away from Thomas Center for Learning.

- All Thomas Center for Learning staff receive training in recognizing and responding to child maltreatment, including abuse and neglect.
- Thomas Center for Learning strictly prohibits the mistreatment, neglect, or abuse of any child in the program by any staff member. Any employee found in violation of the abuse and neglect policies shall be immediately terminated. If the charges are not upheld, the Program Director will determine eligibility for reinstatement.

## **Center Policies**

### **Smoke-Free and Weapon-Free Environment**

Thomas Center for Learning and both playgrounds are smoke-free and tobacco-free environments. Smoking and the use of any product containing, made, or derived from tobacco, including e-cigarettes, cigars, little cigars, smokeless tobacco, and hookah, shall not be permitted on the premises of the childcare center or during any off-premises activities. Additionally, firearms and ammunition are prohibited in all licensed childcare centers, including Thomas Center for Learning, unless carried by a law enforcement officer.

### **Transportation**

Thomas Center for Learning provides transportation to and from children's schools. We currently do pick up/drop off from schools within the area of our facility. Please see the Program Director for more information.

### **Babysitting**

Thomas Center for Learning strongly discourages families from entering employment arrangements with staff. Staff should not babysit children or receive tips or monetary gifts from families to care for children.

However, we recognize that our staff members are highly trained, wonderful people and are often the people that know your child best, next to you. Any arrangement between a family and a Thomas Center for Learning employee for employment or services outside the program and services of Thomas Center for Learning is an individual endeavor and private matter, not connected or sanctioned by Thomas Center for Learning.

### **Program Oversight**

Our program's quality and compliance with State laws are carefully regulated and evaluated annually by the Office of Child Development and Early Learning (OCDEL). In addition, we also ask parents to complete and return an evaluation of the program intermittently. Summaries of evaluations are presented to our Board of Directors to enable them to monitor the quality of our services.

## **Code of Ethical Conduct**

For an updated NAEYC Code of Ethical Conduct, please go to [www.naeyc.org](http://www.naeyc.org).

## **Commitment to Diversity**

Tolerance and understanding are fostered by positive exposure to various ages, genders, lifestyles, family structures, races, cultures, religions, and physical abilities. Therefore, we emphasize an environment that welcomes diversity and challenges bias and discrimination.

## **Grievance Procedure**

Disagreements may occur, even with the best of intentions. Experience has taught us that open communication is the key to maintaining a positive relationship. The adults must demonstrate the cooperative, compassionate communication we want our children to imitate. If you have a concern, please discuss it with your child's teacher or the staff involved. If the concern is not resolved to the satisfaction of all parties, a meeting can be arranged between the persons involved and a member of the administration. At that time, a course of action can be determined.

## **Legal Information**

### **Nondiscrimination**

Thomas Center for Learning does not and shall not discriminate on the basis of race, color, religion (creed), gender, gender expression, age, national origin (ancestry), disability, marital status, sexual orientation, or military status in any of its activities or operations. These activities include, but are not limited to, hiring, and firing of staff, selection of volunteers and vendors, and provision of services. We are committed to providing an inclusive and welcoming environment for all staff members, clients, volunteers, subcontractors, vendors, and clients. Thomas Center for Learning is an equal opportunity employer. We will not discriminate and will take affirmative action measures to ensure against discrimination in employment, recruitment, advertisements for employment, compensation, termination, upgrading, promotions, and other conditions of employment against any employee or job applicant on the basis of race, color, gender, national origin, age, religion, creed, disability, veteran's status, sexual orientation, gender identity or gender expression.

### **Americans with Disabilities Act**

Our policy is to accept children in compliance with the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA), its regulations, and any other applicable local, state, or federal laws pertaining to providing services to individuals with disabilities.

## Record Retention

Thomas Center for Learning complies with the requirements outlined in the "Records Retention and Disposition Schedule" developed by the Department of Human Services.

## USDA

In accordance with Federal civil rights law and U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) civil rights regulations and policies, the USDA, its Agencies, offices, and employees, and institutions participating in or administering USDA programs are prohibited from discriminating based on race, color, national origin, religion, sex, gender identity (including gender expression), sexual orientation, disability, age, marital status, family/parental status, income derived from a public assistance program, political beliefs, or reprisal or retaliation for prior civil rights activity, in any program or activity conducted or funded by USDA (not all bases apply to all programs). Remedies and complaint filing deadlines vary by program or incident.

Persons with disabilities who require alternative means of communication for program information (e.g., Braille, large print, audiotope, American Sign Language, etc.) should contact the responsible Agency or USDA's TARGET Center at (202) 720-2600 (voice and TTY) or contact USDA through the Federal Relay Service at (800) 877-8339. Additionally, program information may be made available in languages other than English.

To file a program discrimination complaint, complete the USDA Program Discrimination Complaint Form, AD-3027, found online at [How to File a Program Discrimination Complaint](#) and at any USDA office or write a letter addressed to USDA and provide in the letter all of the information requested in the form. To request a copy of the complaint form, call (866) 632-9992.

Submit your completed form or letter to USDA by:

1) Mail:

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

2) Fax: (202) 690-7442; or

3) Email: [program.intake@usda.gov](mailto:program.intake@usda.gov).

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