

***Thomas Center for  
Learning and  
Physical Literacy  
Development  
Staff Handbook***



800 E. Tulpehocken Street

Philadelphia, PA 19138

(267) 331-9944

[info@thomaslearning.org](mailto:info@thomaslearning.org)

**About This Handbook**

Welcome to the Thomas Center for Learning and Physical Literacy Development. This handbook is being provided as a way to provide you, our newest team member, with information regarding our philosophy, guidelines, policies and procedures regarding terms of employment as well as the expectations of the staff.

Any changes (updates, additions or deletions) to this information will be given to you throughout the year to add to your copy.

Read the information in this handbook. Write in it, take notes—it is yours! Ask me any questions you may have regarding any of the information contained in it.

Once you have read it and asked any questions, Sign, date and return the signature page to me. It will be placed in your employee file.

I am very excited for you to begin your position as a team member here at Thomas Center for Learning and Physical Literacy Development.

Sincerely,

Cathia Thomas, M.Ed

Founder and Director

## **Disclaimer**

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.

## **At Will Employment**

This handbook is prepared to provide you with information and guidelines. It is not a contract of employment between Thomas Center for Learning and Physical Literacy Development and you, as the employee. Since Pennsylvania is an at-will employment state, you are not under contract for employment. Thus, employment with Thomas Center for Learning and Physical Literacy Development is not for a definite term. The center or you may terminate employment at any time, for any reason, or for no reason at all.

## **Job Description**

- ❖ Provide active supervision to children at all times
- ❖ Engage positively with children (board games, outdoor play, etc)
- ❖ Lead large group and small group activities
- ❖ Implement curriculum and complete child observations/ assessments
- ❖ Prepare & serve meals according to CACFP regulations
- ❖ Light housekeeping (disinfect tables and chairs, take out trash, sweep, mop, vacuum)
- ❖ Attend team meetings to discuss children's goals and progress
- ❖ Be a good role model for fitness and exercise
- ❖ Show enthusiasm and care to children
- ❖ Work well with other staff members
- ❖ Complete onboarding paperwork and required trainings
- ❖ All other duties as assigned

## Hiring Procedures

The following procedures will be followed when hiring personnel:

- Resume and job application must be submitted
- Record of qualifications as required under PA State Code 3270
- References will be checked and documented
- Criminal Offender Record Information and Sexual Offender Registry Information checks are both required to be completed and approved by PA Department of Human Services (PA-DHS) prior to a new employee's start date. New record checks will be performed annually or as deemed appropriate by either the Program Director or PA-DHS
- Health Records of all employees must be on file (See "Staff Health Requirements" in this handbook for more information.)
- New hires will be on a probationary period for 90 days
- See [www.thomaslearning.org/stafflounge](http://www.thomaslearning.org/stafflounge) for required forms

## Minimum Standards for Childcare Policy

All staff are expected to be knowledgeable with the Minimum Standards for Childcare following PA State Code 3270 Child Care Centers. Failure to adhere to these policies in the state code may result in disciplinary action, up to and including termination.

- Staff at our childcare center must be 18 years or older and have a high school diploma or equivalent.
- Each staff member must be certified in Pediatric First Aid/CPR and Infant CPR.
- All staff members must have all state documents filled out and completed in their files before they are hired.
- Each staff member must be cleared through the State of Pennsylvania with an FBI fingerprinting background check, Criminal History Clearance, Child Abuse, National Sex Offender Registry Clearance every 60 months or as needed.
- Each staff member must obtain 20 clock training hours annually.

**New Hire Orientation and Orientation Process**

All new staff members will be asked to read the Thomas Center for Learning and Physical Literacy Development staff and parent handbooks. Prior to working in the classroom, the Director and/or Assistant Director will schedule an orientation meeting to complete required paperwork, and review center operation and policies. There are four types of orientation meetings: New Hire Orientation, Annual Orientation, Summer Camp Orientation and Volunteer Orientation.

The program director will conduct a two-hour staff orientation prior to the beginning of the school each year and summer camp. All employees are required to attend orientation each school year and summer. The following topics will be reviewed but is not limited to:

- Review of job description and salary range
- Overview of Mission-Vision-Philosophy
- Personnel policy
- Statement of purpose & statement of non-discrimination
- Health care policy
- Information contained in the students' records and confidentiality policy
- Behavior management plan
- Termination and suspension policy
- Program plans
- Referral procedures
- Procedures for parent visits, input, conferences & communication
- Procedures for sick time
- The identification of the state licensing authority and contact information of such.

## **Volunteers in the Classroom Policy**

Parents and student interns can be a wonderful experience in the classroom. However, a person cannot volunteer in the classroom (even if only for an hour) unless they have completed the paperwork required by state licensing. Please direct any individuals wanting to volunteer within the classroom to the director.

Once approved, the director will conduct an orientation with the volunteer to let them know of their responsibilities and our classroom procedures (including, but not limited to daily schedule, emergency procedures, and child guidance policies).

On their volunteer day, each volunteer must list their name and the time they arrive and leave on the attendance sheet. Volunteers will be under the direct supervision of a qualified staff member at all times. The volunteer will not be alone with a child at any time in accordance with state regulations and should defer child guidance/discipline concerns to the supervising educator.

All Volunteers are required to complete:

- Volunteer Commitment Form
- Volunteer Acknowledgment & Liability Waiver
- FBI Fingerprinting Clearance
- Child Abuse Clearance
- Criminal History Clearance
- National Sex Offender Registry Clearance
- DHS Volunteer Disclosure Statement
- Professional Headshot & Short Bio
- Volunteer Orientation Training

Volunteers will find more information on [www.thomaslearning.org/support](http://www.thomaslearning.org/support)

## **Who We Are**

### **Mission and Vision**

The mission of Thomas Center for Learning and Physical Literacy Development is to offer programs to engage students 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 students, 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. students 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. And 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. Students 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.

## **NonDiscrimination Statements**

### **Diversity & Inclusivity Policy**

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.

### **Equal Opportunity Employment Policy**

An open and equitable personnel system will be established and maintained. Personnel policies, procedures and practices will be designed to prohibit discrimination on the basis of race, color, religious creed, disability, ancestry, national origin (including limited English proficiency), age, or sex. Employment opportunities shall be provided for applicants with disabilities and reasonable accommodation(s) shall be made to meet the physical or mental limitations of qualified applicants or employees. Any employee who believes they have been discriminated against, may file a complaint of discrimination with any of the following.

Thomas Center for Learning and Physical  
Literacy Development  
800 E. Tulpehocken Street  
Philadelphia PA 19138

Department of Human Services  
Bureau of Equal Opportunity  
Room 223, Health & Welfare Building  
PO Box 2675  
Harrisburg, PA 17105

U.S. Dept. of Health & Human Services  
Office for Civil Rights  
Suite 372, Public Ledger Bldg.  
150 South Independence Mall West  
Philadelphia, PA 19106-9111

PA Human Relations Commission  
Philadelphia Regional Office  
110 N 8th Street, Suite 501  
Philadelphia, PA 19107



## Hours of Operation

We operate on a split schedule during the school year, we are open Monday through Friday from 7:00 am to 9:00 am and then from 2:30 pm to 5:30 pm. Children are enrolled part-time during the school year. We operate on a full day schedule during our summer camp. We do not babysit children. We do not accommodate children during the days schools are closed for a federal holiday or staff professional development day.

## Calendar and Closures

Our center is closed on the following days in every year:

Labor Day  
 Thanksgiving & The Day After  
 Veteran's Day  
 Winter Recess  
 New Year's Eve & New Year's Day  
 Martin Luther King Jr., Birthday  
 President's Day  
 Spring Break  
 Eid al-Fitr  
 Memorial Day  
 Juneteenth  
 Independence Day  
 Summer Break

## Inclement Weather Policy

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 on a 2-hour delay.

## **Timekeeping and Pay**

Employees will be paid on a bi-weekly basis. Staff members are required to complete their time cards via the Procure App. If staff encounter issues when clocking in and out they must notify the Program Director via text or email (including a screenshot of the issue) at the time of technical difficulty so that the hours can be recorded accordingly. The staff member's email and text to the Program Director will be used as a timestamp in lieu of the Procure App if there is a technical difficulty.

Staff must communicate discrepancies in total hours worked prior to payroll submission. Otherwise, staff may wait for the following pay period to see corrections reflected on their paycheck. An administrator will still need to verify total hours worked. Communicating discrepancies does not guarantee payment. If a staff member works additional hours, authorized by the director, they will receive payment for the additional time worked.

Payroll is processed through direct deposit. Paper checks will not be provided. Staff can view/edit their payroll information on [intuit.workforce.com](https://intuit.workforce.com).

## **Benefits**

Eligible staff will receive:

1. A monthly cell phone reimbursement, up to \$35/month
2. A monthly employer sponsored gym membership
3. An annual book stipend for continuing education expenses and free membership to our Corporate Entertainment Benefits provider, offering exclusive discounts, special offers and access to preferred seating and tickets to top attractions, theme parks, shows, sporting events, movie tickets, hotels and much more.
4. Free/reduced Child care for staff members' children

## **Employee Conduct, Attendance and Punctuality**

### **Dress Code Policy**

The staff is required to wear appropriate, non-revealing clothing to school. Jeans are fine, so long as they are not ripped or worn in “an overly revealing” way. It is recommended that teachers and aides dress for comfort to allow sitting on the floor, outdoor play, and getting messy and wear footwear that allows for the same (no open-toed or high-heeled footwear). Each staff member will receive a company-logo T-shirt to wear on field trips. Staff are responsible for paying for any additional shirts they need.

### **Employee Schedule Policy**

Staff schedules will be determined by staff availability and the needs of the program. Positions are part-time positions (4-6 hrs/week avg) during the school year but no more than 15 hours a week during the summer.

### **Absence and Tardiness Policy**

It is our policy that any staff member who cannot come to work on their scheduled day or by their scheduled start time, must contact the Director at least two hours before (if on the day of) or as early as possible so that appropriate alternate plans can be made. Staff will not be paid for sick days, or other unauthorized absences. Staff cannot make up for missed hours. Staff may request days off by notifying the Program Director at least two weeks in advance.

### **Contacting the Program**

Facility Phone: 800-508-8565

Email: [info@thomaslearning.org](mailto:info@thomaslearning.org)

Classroom Phone 267-331-9944.

Director's Cell Phone 267-571-6537

Address: 800 E. Tulpehocken St. Philadelphia, PA 19138

Public Transportation Accessible:

**SEPTA Bus Routes** XH, 18, K; **Regional Rail**: Chestnut Hill East Line-Washington Lane;

**Subway**: Broad Street Line-Olney Transportation Center

## **Work from Home Policy**

Employees are allowed to work from home only if their job duties permit it. For example, staff who are obliged to come in direct physical contact with children and families are not eligible to telecommute under this policy. But, employees who carry out most of their work on a computer can occasionally work off-site.

Employees work from home or telecommute when they complete their work at a place located outside of our company's premises. They may work from home:

- Full-time
- On certain days
- Everyday, dividing their schedule between being present at the office and working from a remote location.

Work from home arrangements can be occasional, temporary or permanent. Reasons that could demand telecommuting include but are not limited to:

- Parenting
- Bad weather
- Emergencies
- Medical reasons
- Work-life balance
- Overlong commute
- Other reasons for working from home depend on employees and the Director's judgment.

When employees plan to work from home, this procedure must be followed:

*Employees file a request through email at least two days in advance. The Director must approve their request considering all elements we mentioned above. If the work from home arrangement spans for more than a week, the Director should meet with the employee to discuss details and set specific goals, schedules and deadlines.*

*Employees who need to work from home for unforeseen reasons (e.g. illness or temporary difficult commute) should file their request as soon as possible, so the Director can consider and approve it.*

### Time-off Requests Policy


All time off requests must be in writing to the director at least 2 weeks prior to the time being requested off. The director will check schedules and either approve or disapprove requests. Decisions will be made based on staffing needs and availability to properly cover classrooms to be within state compliance. A written time off request does not guarantee approval of request.

### Personal Breaks Policy

Staff who work directly with students for more than four hours receive a 15-minute break for each four-hour period. Staff may request a short and immediate break when they are unable to perform their duties.

### Prep Schedule Policy

Staff use time prior to school dismissal/ student arrival to complete the health and safety checklist and collaborate on lesson planning.

 <b>THOMAS CENTER</b> <small>FOR LEARNING AND PHYSICAL LITERACY DEVELOPMENT</small>		<b>After School Teacher Schedule</b>			
	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday
1:30 pm	Health & Safety Checklist	Health & Safety Checklist	Health & Safety Checklist	Health & Safety Checklist	Health & Safety Checklist
2:00 pm	Collaborative Planning Time	Collaborative Planning Time	Collaborative Planning Time	Collaborative Planning Time	Collaborative Planning Time
3:00 pm	Snack / HW	Snack / HW	Snack / HW	Snack / Clubs	Snack / Clubs
4:00 pm	Outdoor Play	Outdoor Play	Outdoor Play	Outdoor Play	Outdoor Play
5:00 pm	Classroom Jobs	Classroom Jobs	Classroom Jobs	Classroom Jobs	Classroom Jobs
5:30 pm	Closing Task list	Closing Task list	Closing Task list	Closing Task list	Closing Task list

### Educator Planning Time Policy

Employees are offered 2.5 hours per week of paid planning time. Employees use this time to review curriculum, set up the classroom, collaborate with each other, discuss child individualization plans, assess the environment for accommodations and modifications needed.

### **Organizational Climate Policy**

The purpose of the organizational climate policy is to regulate employee social events and team-building activities. Social events and team-building exercises are important elements in creating a positive work culture. Productivity is increased, absenteeism is decreased and overall employee morale is improved. Directors have discretion in planning these events.

Procedures:

Social events including team-building events, shall be limited to no more than four (4) events per year.

Events shall be planned and held during lunch breaks or at the end of the work day when possible to not disrupt the regular course of business. Employees shall not be paid for planning or attending social events.

Adequate employee coverage must be maintained at all times during normal work hours.

Meals at events shall be funded by the company budget.

Examples of activities include but are not limited to:

Birthday Club- employees make monetary contribution and gift employee during an employee birthday

Employee Appreciation Day

Teacher Appreciation Week

Staff Retreat Events/ Trips

Team Building Activities

In addition to these structured activities, a positive culture is developed by employees in many ways, such as: staff greeting each other, resolving disagreements professionally, seeking student-first solutions, friendly demeanor, non confrontational body language, relaxed facial expressions and mutual respect. Employees are encouraged to self assess and take feedback to reflect the positive attitude of a team work environment.

### **Open Door Policy**

Open Door Policy is open communication in an environment of trust and mutual respect that creates a solid foundation for collaboration, growth, high performance and success. It provides for a work environment where:

- open, honest communication between managers and employees is a day-to-day business practice

- employees may seek counsel, provide or solicit feedback, or raise concerns within the company
- The Director holds the responsibility for creating a work environment where employees' input is welcome, advice is freely given, and issues are surfaced early and are candidly shared without the fear of retaliation when this input is shared in good faith

### **Confidentiality**

Information regarding the students, families and/or staff is privileged and confidential. The staff is expected to keep information shared confidential and not discuss information in front of the students, other families or other staff members.

Information contained in a child's record shall be privileged and confidential. Parents shall have access, upon request, to their child's record at reasonable times. A written log shall be included in a child's record indicating any time a child's record has been released.

Staff should also be careful in discussing details of the center operation, particularly problem areas, with others in public. Staff members may not distribute or post children's last names, address, phone numbers, etc. with the exception of distribution to employees. Personal information should never be used for personal purposes. Pennsylvania law specifically prohibits the sharing of information about children or staff members within a child care setting without written consent from the parent, guardian, or individual. This applies to outside professionals as well. You must seek written parental consent before consulting with an outside agency about a child.

### **Grievance Policy**

It is important that all staff members be discreet in sharing information regarding the children and their parents in public areas. Names and identifying characteristics of children and families should not be shared with anyone other than staff members working in the classroom and the Director and/or Assistant Director. Confidentiality is expected and required when grievances arise; staff members who discuss issues with individuals not directly related to the situation may be subject to the Disciplinary Procedure.

### **Mandated Reporter Policy**

All staff are mandated reporters and shall report suspected child abuse or neglect.

## **Abuse must be reported 24/7 to Childline at 1 (800) 932-0313**

Staff shall cooperate in all investigations of abuse and neglect. Allegations of abuse or neglect against a staff member will be documented and reported as outlined in PA State Code 3270. Alleged abusive or neglectful staff members will not work directly with students until the Department of Social Services' investigation is completed and for such further time as the Department determines.

### **Staff Disciplinary Policy**

A staff member will be suspended if he/she fails to perform his/her job in accordance with their job description, has excessive tardiness, and/or is absent excessively without a physician's note. A written report will be filed indicating the reason for suspension, and the period of the suspension. If the problem indicated on the suspension report is not corrected within the indicated time period, or if the staff member repeats the offense, the Director will dismiss the staff member from his/her position.

### **Sexual Harassment Policy**

It is the policy of Thomas Center for Learning and Physical Literacy Development that all employees are responsible for ensuring that our program is free from sexual harassment. All employees must avoid offensive or inappropriate sexual behavior at work and any action or conduct which could be viewed as sexual harassment.

Any complaints of sexual harassment should first be brought to the attention of the harasser, letting him/her know that his/her behavior is offensive or unwelcome and requesting that it stop immediately. The issue should then be brought to the attention of the Director. The Director will meet with the harasser and take necessary action varying from a discussion to suspension/termination.

### **Employee Fraternalization policy**

Thomas Center for Learning and Physical Literacy Development holds its employees to the highest ethical and professional standards. As such, we have created a fraternization policy that outlines our guidelines regarding employees forming personal relationships with each other. Our



goal is to protect the well-being of our employees and retain the professional working environment.

#### Workplace and dating relationships

Employees of Thomas Center for Learning and Physical Literacy Development are encouraged to develop and maintain professional relationships in the workplace, so long as these relationships do not interfere with the effective functioning of the workplace and goals of our company. This policy does not prevent the development of friendships or even romantic relationships between coworkers, but it does establish boundaries as to how relationships are conducted during working hours and within the working environment.

Before developing romantic relationships, consider the potential for:

- Workplace gossip
- Conflicts of interest
- Sexual harassment allegations
- Favoritism
- Repercussions of a break-up
- Work distraction

Employees who engage in consensual romantic relationships must conduct themselves in an appropriate professional manner while on company property. They should not engage in any inappropriate behaviors that may cause their coworkers to feel embarrassed, awkward or uncomfortable. This includes, but is not limited to, intimate contact like:

- Kissing
- Prolonged hugging
- Hand holding
- Massaging
- Personal texting, emails and calls

Romantic relationships between managers and their employees are not permitted. This situation is unhealthy for workplace morale and creates a conflict of interest, plus the chance for coercion and/or preferential treatment. Any supervisor, manager or director within the company who engages in a romantic relationship with a member of his or her team must report it to the human

resources department immediately. Once reported, the company will analyze the situation to determine a resolution.

Failure to comply with this fraternization policy may result in termination, departmental transfers or voluntary resignation. Employees may report policy violations anonymously through this link.

You will not be penalized for reporting inappropriate behavior.

### **Cell Phone Policy**

We have a cell phone free classroom policy. Turn your cell phone OFF (not on vibrate) while in the classroom. This includes any technology such as Apple watches, Air pods, Bluetooth headphones or other technological devices. When necessary, staff will be required to lock their devices away.

We need your attention to be focused on the students, not on text messages or social network updates. Talking on the telephone is distracting and disruptive to the students, your team members and the classroom in general. See our Active Supervision Policy.

If you need to receive a call during work hours, instruct the person calling to use the telephone number 800-508-8565 or 267-331-9944. If you need to make a call during work hours, make arrangements to have a qualified person cover the classroom while you step out of the classroom to make the call. Cell phone use on your break and lunch times are fine, however, make sure you are not in the classroom during that time. Staff are required to provide active supervision.

### **Social Media Policy**

At Thomas Center for Learning and Physical Literacy Development, we understand that social media can be a fun and rewarding way to share your life and opinions with family, friends and co-workers around the world. However, use of social media also presents certain risks and

carries with it certain responsibilities. To assist you in making responsible decisions about your use of social media, we have established these guidelines for appropriate use of social media.

### Guidelines

In the rapidly expanding world of electronic communication, social media can mean many things. Social media includes all means of communicating or posting information or content of any sort on the Internet, including to your own or someone else's web log or blog, journal or diary, personal website, social networking or affinity website, web bulletin board or a chat room, whether or not associated or affiliated with Thomas Center for Learning and Physical Literacy Development, as well as any other form of electronic communication.

The same principles and guidelines found in Thomas Center for Learning and Physical Literacy Development policies and three basic beliefs apply to your activities online. Ultimately, you are solely responsible for what you post online. Before creating online content, consider some of the risks and rewards that are involved. Keep in mind that any of your conduct that adversely affects your job performance, the performance of fellow staff or otherwise adversely affects members, customers, suppliers, people who work on behalf of Thomas Center for Learning and Physical Literacy Development or Thomas Center for Learning and Physical Literacy Development legitimate business interests may result in disciplinary action up to and including termination.

### Know and follow the rules

Inappropriate postings that may include discriminatory remarks, harassment, and threats of violence or similar inappropriate or unlawful conduct will not be tolerated and may subject you to disciplinary action up to and including termination.

### Be respectful

Always be fair and courteous to fellow staff, customers, members, suppliers or people who work on behalf of Thomas Center for Learning and Physical Literacy Development. Also, keep in mind that you are more likely to resolve work-related complaints by speaking directly with your co-workers or by utilizing our Open Door Policy than by posting complaints to a social media outlet. Nevertheless, if you decide to post complaints or criticism, avoid using statements, photographs, video or audio that reasonably could be viewed as malicious, obscene,

threatening or intimidating, that disparage customers, members, staff or suppliers, or that might constitute harassment or bullying. Examples of such conduct might include offensive posts meant to intentionally harm someone's reputation or posts that could contribute to a hostile work environment on the basis of race, sex, disability, religion or any other status protected by law or company policy.

#### Be honest and accurate

Make sure you are always honest and accurate when posting information or news, and if you make a mistake, correct it quickly. Be open about any previous posts you have altered. Remember that the Internet archives almost everything; therefore, even deleted postings can be searched. Never post any information or rumors that you know to be false about Thomas Center for Learning and Physical Literacy Development, fellow staff, members, customers, suppliers, people working on behalf of Thomas Center for Learning and Physical Literacy Development or competitors.

#### Post only appropriate and respectful content

Do not create a link from your blog, website or other social networking site to a Thomas Center for Learning and Physical Literacy Development website without identifying yourself as a Thomas Center for Learning and Physical Literacy Development associate. Express only your personal opinions. Never represent yourself as a spokesperson for Thomas Center for Learning and Physical Literacy Development. If Thomas Center for Learning and Physical Literacy Development is a subject of the content you are creating, be clear and open about the fact that you are an associate and make it clear that your views do not represent those of Thomas Center for Learning and Physical Literacy Development, fellow staff, members, customers, suppliers or people working on behalf of Thomas Center for Learning and Physical Literacy Development. If you do publish a blog or post online related to the work you do or subjects associated with Thomas Center for Learning and Physical Literacy Development, make it clear that you are not speaking on behalf of Thomas Center for Learning and Physical Literacy Development. It is best to include a disclaimer such as "The postings on this site are my own and do not necessarily reflect the views of Thomas Center for Learning and Physical Literacy Development."

### Using social media at work

Refrain from using social media while on work time or on equipment we provide, unless it is work-related as authorized by the Director. Do not use Thomas Center for Learning and Physical Literacy Development email addresses to register on social networks, blogs or other online tools utilized for personal use.

### Retaliation is prohibited

Thomas Center for Learning and Physical Literacy Development prohibits taking negative action against any staff for reporting a possible deviation from this policy or for cooperating in an investigation. Any staff who retaliates against another staff for reporting a possible deviation from this policy or for cooperating in an investigation will be subject to disciplinary action, up to and including termination.

### Media contacts

Staff should not speak to the media on Thomas Center for Learning and Physical Literacy Development's behalf without contacting the Owner or Director. All media inquiries should be directed to them.

### For more information

If you have questions or need further guidance, contact the Program Director

## **Smoking Policy**

Because we recognize the hazards caused by exposure to environmental tobacco smoke, as well as the diseases linked to the use of all forms of tobacco, we are a tobacco free campus. This policy covers the smoking of any tobacco product and the use of oral tobacco products or "spit" tobacco, and it applies to employees, volunteers and visitors of the program.

## **Alcohol and Drug Policy**

We are a drug-free workplace. The purpose of this policy is to provide a safe environment for all the students and staff in our program. This policy applies to all staff and volunteers and covers the following substances: alcohol, illegal drugs, inhalants, prescription and over-the-counter drugs. If taking prescription drugs during work hours, they must be prescribed by a licensed healthcare provider.

Any prescription or over-the-counter drugs must not affect your ability to work safely. You must follow the directions (including dosage limits and usage precautions). You must keep these drugs in their original containers or bring only a single-day supply. No medications will be stored in the classroom. They must be in a locked area away from the students.

The use of alcohol, illegal drugs or not complying with the above policy on prescription and/or over-the counter drugs will result in immediate termination of the staff member's employment.

### **Staff Health Requirements**

All staff members are required to have the following certification from their physician:

1. Evidence of a physical examination within one year prior to employment (valid for 1 year from the date the staff member was examined and shall be repeated every year thereafter).
2. Evidence of immunity to measles, mumps, and rubella, as required.
3. Statement of physical limitations in working with students, if applicable.

If, in the Director/Owner's judgment, an employee's physical condition requires a current physical examination, the director/owner may require that such employee provide documentation of a current physical examination and indication of any physical limitations in working with students.

The program shall not require such certification of any person who states in writing that vaccination or immunization conflicts with his/her sincere religious beliefs or if medically contra-indicated.

Employee face mask policy (during COVID-19)

Sick Leave Entitlement

Requesting Sick Leave

Supporting Evidence for the Use of Sick Leave

Sick Leave for Exposure to Communicable Disease

Pregnancy/Childbirth

Other Available Leave Options and Work Schedule Flexibilities

Staff Mental Health Policy

Accessing Community Resources for General Wellness

### **Universal Precautions Policy**

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 students 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.

## **Hand Hygiene Policy**

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

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.

## **Staff Meeting Policy**

The Program director and staff shall meet for two hours per month to address program issues, meeting individual needs of students, policies, and parent communication. Staff meeting dates and times will be posted by the director at the beginning of each school year.

## **Staff Supervision and Evaluation Policy**

The director shall observe, at least once each month, each staff member while working with students and meet with staff members as needed to discuss students' individual needs and needs of families. Staff performance evaluations are performed at least annually and will include recommendations for staff training and professional development needs. Staff members shall review, provide input, comment on and sign and return annual evaluations.



Documentation of all observations and consultations shall be filed in the staff member's employee file.

### **Staff Training Requirement Policy**

All staff must participate in at least 20 hours of professional training to increase skills and competence. Training will be provided for free or at a reduced cost; however, some trainings will require employees to pay out of pocket.

- ALL training must be approved by the Director **prior to** being applied to the annual required training hours. Training will be recorded on the PD Registry.

Staff members will be required to participate in and pass both First Aid and CPR training (First aid will be every 2 years; CPR will be yearly). These training hours do not apply to the annual training hour requirements listed below.

Staff members will be required to complete and pass the Medication Administration training. This training does not apply to the annual training hour requirements.

### **Classroom Management**

#### **Active Supervision Policy**

Thomas Center for Learning staff assume responsibility for enrolled students 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 students at all times. Staff will position themselves so that they can observe all of the students: watching, counting, and listening at all times. During transitions, staff will account for all students 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 students learn safely.

**Child Assessment Policy**

Teachers and Lead Teachers will observe students in the program throughout the year by recording observations, anecdotes, checklists, and other methods. These observations will be included in the student's records.

Based on these ongoing observations, teachers and lead teachers will complete written progress reports for each child. The reports will be provided to the parents in November and again in May at the Parent/Teacher Conferences. All reports must be completed and submitted to the Director two weeks before the Parent/Teacher Conference dates. For students with special identified needs, progress reports will be completed and provided to parents in November, February and May.

Teachers and Lead Teachers will conduct parent-teacher conferences in the November and May, and on as-needed basis throughout the school year. The director will be available for conferencing with parents on an as-needed basis. Parent-teacher conferences will be conducted during school hours. A parent-requested or teacher-requested conference will be conducted at a mutually agreed upon time between the parent and teacher(s) and the Director.

Concerns about a child's development will be brought to the Director's attention first. The concern will be discussed, noted and placed in the child's file and, if necessary, a conference with the child's parents will be requested by the teacher or director.

**Behavior Management Policy**

It is our belief that students can be influenced by their surroundings. If the environment is not developmentally appropriate, students can become frustrated. To alleviate this we will provide a developmentally appropriate program with plenty of opportunities for the students to make their own choices. However, conflicts will arise and teachers will respond in a positive, appropriate manner. Teachers will use behavior management techniques such as setting reasonable and positive expectations, offering choices, and providing students an opportunity to verbalize their feelings, which encourages students to develop self-control and problem solving through

understanding. There are times in which the child will be incapable of responding to these techniques, and will need extra time to gain their self-control. During these times, the teacher will direct the child to a quiet place within the classroom (i.e. the library area) for some time away from their peers to give the child the opportunity to calm down. This time away will take place within the teacher's view and will not exceed one minute for each year of the child's age.

Parents will be notified of any behavior management concerns and will be asked to work along with the teachers in helping the child with inappropriate behaviors. ***Prior to notifying a parent of behavior concerns, teachers will meet with the Director where the behavior will be discussed as a team.*** The teacher shall then use discretion and reinforce that our program staff wish to work alongside the parent to help the child with his/her behavior. Teachers will reinforce to the parent that the *child* is loved but it is the *behavior* that is undesirable.

Spanking or other corporal punishment of students is ***never*** used. It is our policy to never subject students to cruel or severe punishment such as humiliation, verbal or physical abuse, or deprivation of snacks. students will not be deprived of meals or snacks, or be force-fed. There will be no disciplining or condescending for soiling, wetting, or not using the toilet. students will not be forced to remain in soiled clothing or to remain on the toilet, nor will staff use any other unusual or excessive practices for toileting. Staff will work with each child as he/she is ready for toileting, by encouraging and praising his/her efforts. Any staff member who does not comply with this behavior management plan will be terminated from the program.

### **Behavior 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 students (NAEYC):

- Observe the students 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 students 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.**

### **Incident Reporting Policy**

All accidents must be reported immediately to the Owner/Director or person designated by the Owner/Director left in charge of the center in her absence. Incident reports must be made in writing, signed by the Owner/Director (or designee), copied for the child's file, and a copy must be given to the parent on the date of the incident. Parents must be notified and time of notification must be recorded on the incident report.

\*Use the health and safety checklist to keep classrooms and the outside area free from hazards.

**Child Pick-Up Policy**

Students may only be discharged to those persons authorized on their pick-up forms. It is the staff's responsibility to know who those people are. Staff members should ask for picture identification for all persons picking up students and compare the name to the pick-up forms. Staff should continue to do this until they are familiar with the authorized persons. When in doubt ASK FOR PICTURE ID. Parents are told this will happen upon enrollment.

If an alternate person is picking a child up who is not on the pick-up list, the parent must notify the teacher or director in person or in writing. The parent must give the complete name and spelling of the alternate person. The staff will ask for a picture identification upon pick up of the child. Staff members are NOT to release a child to an unauthorized person or, in the case of not being familiar with a person who is picking a child up, asking for a picture identification. Not following this policy will result in immediate dismissal.

**Classroom Budget Policy**

There is a classroom budget amount set each year for each classroom. Teachers will be notified of their budget amount at the annual Staff Orientation. Teachers are responsible for informing the director of any items that may be required for activities such as art, cooking, experiments and other activities if they need to be purchased. Teachers may purchase items and be reimbursed for out-of-pocket expenses for items approved by the director. All expenses must, unless authorized by the Director, fall within the total budgeted amount for the classroom.

**Classroom Ratios**

Although our child care license is for a maximum group size of 30 students in the facility, our policy is to keep the maximum group size to 5-6 students per group. The teacher to child ratio for young school age is 1 to 12 for older school age is 1 to 15. One additional teacher or assistant is required for 13-16 students. Staff to be included in ratios must be teacher qualified. Assistants, student interns, or parents who do not meet the qualifications for teacher, will not be assigned to a group without a teacher-qualified staff member. There shall be two staff persons in the facility when 2 or more children are present.

## **Playground Policy**

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.

Gross motor activity is important to a child's health and for their fine and gross motor growth and development. Outdoor play is part of each classroom's schedule. The students will go outside to play every day. In the event of inclement weather (too cold, too hot), staff will provide one ½ of gross motor play indoors in the free space room. students will go outside if the weather is permitting, that means the temperature is comfortable and safe for students and staff to play between a windchill or 32 degrees and heat index of 90 degrees with no active precipitation.

## **Food Safety Policy**

These are steps that staff must take to ensure food safety when providing drinks, meals, and snacks, staff must:

- Maintain up-to-date record of children with food allergies and special dietary needs
- Adhere to handwashing procedure within the hand hygiene policy
- Sanitize table and food surfaces before serving meals
- Thoroughly wash all fruits and vegetables prior to eating.
- Discard any foods with expired dates
- Never use plastic or polystyrene (Styrofoam™) containers, plates, bags, or wraps when microwaving children's food or beverages.

Note- Microwaves are never used to heat children's food or beverages, unless NSF Approval sticker/label is present

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. For children of any age with special feeding needs, and for all infants, staff must do the following each day:

- Document the type and quantity of food the child consumes
- Provide this information to the child's family

Special feeding needs: Food intolerance, allergy, health concerns (e.g., diabetes, overweight/underweight), or medical conditions that require the use of specialized feeding equipment (e.g., feeding tubes).

### **Photo/Video Release Policy**

We take pictures of the students throughout the year for use in our newsletter, website and Facebook page. Before ANY pictures are taken, each family must give separate permissions for Social Media (Facebook, website use); Photographs to be used on-site (newsletters and in the classroom) and recordings (video recordings of any kind). Parents are given these forms to complete upon enrollment.

Each staff member must be aware of who has and has not given permissions for these.

Pictures and recordings must be taken with the classroom camera/recorder ONLY. NOT with personal cell phones.

### **Classroom Clean Up Policy**

Staff are required to assist with classroom cleanup during the school year at mutually agreed upon dates throughout the school year. Staff members will be paid for their time. Clean up should include sanitizing all toys, equipment, tables, chairs, keyboards, etc. Staff are to complete a daily/weekly health and safety checklist, including outdoor playground safety.

### **Snack Policy**

Our program provides snacks for the students. We follow a healthy snack policy for the students and staff. We allow students to bring their own snack as well. The staff should not eat something different from the students in the classroom. Teachers will lead by example by not bringing any of the following items for their snack:

PEANUT BUTTER (any variety) – **\*\*This is for the safety of those with peanut allergies.\*\***; soda; candy, gum, cupcakes, donuts, potato chips, Doritos, etc.

### **Technology in the Classroom Policy**

We have televisions, VR technology, tablets, chromebooks, smartboards and computers for our students to use and learn. These computers have internet access on them. Monitor the students. The internet has filters and blocked inappropriate websites, keep an eye on students to use the technology responsibly. No food or drinks is permitted near our technology.



## **Dual Language Learners / English Language Learners Policy**

Dual language learners (DLLs) are children under the age of five who have at least one parent or guardian who speaks a language other than English at home and are mastering their native language proficiency while learning English simultaneously. It's important for teachers to create a welcoming environment for children and families from all cultures and who speak different languages.

### **Upon enrollment**

We follow these tips from National Association of the Education of Young Children to welcome Dual language learners/ English Language learners:

- Find out what languages will be spoken by children in your class and focus your classroom setup on what will most effectively support children who speak those languages.
- Stock bookshelves with bilingual and monolingual books in each of the languages needed. Look for storybooks and nonfiction books that come with CDs or books available as apps with sound to help you learn to pronounce words in each child's language. Wordless books are also great for multilingual classes.
- Ask families to send in photos of things that are meaningful to each child, such as foods, celebrations, and family activities. Ask them to help you label the images with words in both English and the home language to give you lots to talk about with the children. Use the pictures to make personalized posters, displays, and class books that children can relate to.
- Add labels that reflect the represented languages. Ask families or volunteers to help with the proper and the phonetic spelling. Labels don't build language and literacy unless you and the children really use them.
- Play music from different countries and in different languages. Ask families to send in their favorites to build that home-school connection

### **Staff Resources for DLL/ELL Students**

We have access to and utilize the OCDEL Dual Language Learner Toolkit: The Dual Language Learners (DLL) Tool Kit has been developed to provide research-based information, guidelines,

and principles for early learning professionals to promote culturally competent practice. While it provides a broad range of information about young ELLs and their families, its primary purposes are:

- To define cultural competence and proficiency
- To describe second language acquisition
- To unpack myths and realities about DLLs
- To highlight research and best practices for educating and supporting young DLLs and their families
- To outline strategies to build and sustain culturally competent and proficient early learning professionals and organizations.

### **Staff Training and Professional Development in DLL/ ELL**

#### *PA Dual Language Learner Professional Development Offerings*

Staff are required to complete at minimum 12 hours of training per year which includes training in Dual Language Learning(DLL)/ English Language Learning Practices. There are links to the self-paced learning opportunities are listed below per World-Class Instructional Design and Assessment (WIDA):

WIDA – Dual Language Learners and their Families

WIDA – Dual Language Learners with Disabilities

WIDA – Scaffolding Language Learning for Dual Language Learners

WIDA – Promising Practices for Dual Language Learners

Staff can find all available training within the training calendar on the PD Registry ([www.papdregistry.org](http://www.papdregistry.org)).

### **DLL/ ELL and Classroom Culture Policy**

Accommodations remove learning barriers in the classroom to provide every child with equal access to learning. We provide an inclusive environment which addresses the needs of every

child. We provide an environment that includes children's home languages and cultures. We celebrate diversity and culture. Here are the classroom characteristics and program practices that are in place in general, which also meet the language needs of ELL/DLL students:

- Literacy-Rich Environment
  - Classroom Signage/Labels/Schedule with Text and Picture. Text is displayed in English and Child's Home Language
- Teachers Research and Collaborate with Families to Learn Basic Greetings, Phrases and Commands (Hello, Goodbye, How are you feeling? Are you Hungry? Show Me. Tell Me. Let's Play. Share. We are all Friends. Thank You. Time for Lunch, etc.)
- Letters are sent home in English and in Child's Home Language

Physical environments in early childhood settings should reflect and include all children's home languages and cultures.

### **Continuity of Care Policy**

For all young children to grow and thrive, they need stable relationships with caring adults who are invested in their healthy social, cognitive, physical and language development. Ensuring continuity of care, particularly for vulnerable children and families, is essential if we are to deliver on the promise of positive long term outcomes in future academic and social success linked to high-quality early childhood programming. We provide to children in a manner that promotes primary caregiving and minimizes the number of transitions in teachers and teacher assistants that children experience over the course of the day, week, program year, and to the extent possible.

When children are with the same teachers over time, they get the attention and affection they need to have meaningful relationships. Children thrive and learn about themselves in these close bonds.

- Nurturing, responsive, and effective interactions help children learn.
- Children's routines are steady—allowing them to predict daily experiences.

- Young children have more time to learn that people remain in their lives in caring, meaningful ways—that they can rely on and safely love other people.
- It offers stability for young children whose families experience challenges such as unstable housing, multiple moves, employment issues, or other concerns.
- Families have opportunities for deeper relationships with teachers based on open, two-way lines of communication.

The composition of groups provides the framework for supporting the development of healthy attachments between children and teachers. Smaller group sizes and ratios make it possible for teachers to build stronger relationships with each child in their care and may contribute to staff retention, a key component to implementing continuity of care at the program level.

Group size and ratio: The ratio of adults to children is a common measure of quality, and having fewer children cared for by one adult clearly offers more opportunity for forming quality relationships.

We keep our group sizes small. In addition to our teaching team, we hire interns, college students and volunteers to ensure all of our students are fully seen, heard and supported when in our care.

### **Teacher continuity complements continuity for children**

When early childhood teachers view their job as emotionally and ideologically rewarding, that can contribute to their decision to stay in spite of the economic and socially low status of the child-care profession. Continuity-of-care practices in programs can help teachers see the growth and development of the children they care for in greater depth, increasing their understanding of the significant role they play with each child. We offer:

- Stability of teachers' employment: Policies that promote teacher retention, such as educational assistance for staff enrolled in a college/university or training program, monthly cell phone stipend, sponsored gym membership, all of which we believe will increase the likelihood of the continuity of our teachers. We give annual raises based on teacher performance. We provide coaching and mentoring to support teacher growth and development.

- We pay careful attention to the teacher's schedule: Teachers have a life outside of their job. We honor teachers' family obligations and personal commitments by building relationships with our teachers to get to know them. This way, we schedule them in a way that makes sense for their overall schedule. Scheduling can have a significant impact on the development of relationships with children and families.
- We know that teacher burnout can occur when teachers do not have a work-life balance. We work around teacher's availability, school schedules and provide mental health resources to keep our teachers mentally stimulated and encourage their self-care as priority. Teachers cannot pour into students from an empty cup. We give information to staff about mental health/ counseling services, host staff retreats, staff dinners and give bonuses for exemplary performance.

### **Prevention of Shaken Baby Syndrome, Abusive Head Trauma and Child Maltreatment Policy**

Preventing, recognizing, responding to, and reporting shaken baby syndrome and abusive head trauma (SBS/AHT) is an important function of keeping children safe, protecting their healthy development, providing quality child care, and educating families.

SBS/AHT is the name given to a form of physical child abuse that occurs when an infant or small child is violently shaken and/or there is trauma to the head. Shaking may last only a few seconds but can result in severe injury or even death. According to Pennsylvania Child Care Rule (55 Pa. Code Chapters § 3270, § 3280, and § 3290), all child care facilities shall develop and adopt a policy to prevent SBS/AHT.

#### **Procedure/Practice**

Recognizing:

- Children are observed for signs of abusive head trauma including irritability and/or high pitched crying, difficulty staying awake/lethargy or loss of consciousness, difficulty breathing, inability to lift the head, seizures, lack of appetite, vomiting, bruises, poor feeding/sucking, no smiling or vocalization, inability of the eyes to track and/or

decreased muscle tone. Bruises may be found on the upper arms, rib cage, or head resulting from gripping or from hitting the head.

Responding to:

- If SBS/ABT is suspected, staff will:
  - Call 911 immediately upon suspecting SBS/AHT and inform the director.
  - Call the parents/guardians.
  - If the child has stopped breathing, trained staff will begin pediatric CPR.

Reporting:

- Instances of suspected child maltreatment in child care are reported to Childline by calling 1-800-932-0313.

### **Prevention strategies to assist staff in coping with a crying, fussing, or distraught child**

Staff first determine if the child has any physical needs such as being hungry, tired, sick, or in need of a diaper change. If no physical need is identified, staff will attempt one or more of the following strategies:

- Rock the child, hold the child close, or walk with the child.
- Stand up, hold the child close, and repeatedly bend knees.
- Sing or talk to the child in a soothing voice.
- Gently rub or stroke the child's back, chest, or tummy.
- Offer a pacifier or try to distract the child with a rattle or toy.
- Take the child for a ride in a stroller.
- Turn on music or white noise.

In addition, the facility:

- Allows staff who feel they may lose control to have a short, but relatively immediate break away from the children.
- Provides support when parents/guardians are trying to calm a crying child and encourage parents to take a calming break if needed.

## **Prevention of Shaken Baby Syndrome, Abusive Head Trauma, and Child Maltreatment Professional Development Training Requirement Policy**

All staff are required training in prevention of shaken baby syndrome, abusive head trauma, and child maltreatment. As a result, training in this health and safety topic is a requirement at 55 Pa. Code § 3270.31(f)(6), § 3280.31(f)(6), and § 3280.31(g)(6). This requires all child care staff to successfully complete all training requirements related to the prevention of shaken baby syndrome, abusive head trauma, and child maltreatment prior to a child care staff caring for children unsupervised. This means untrained child care staff must be supervised at all times by a trained, qualified child care staff person (at a minimum assistant group supervisor or primary staff person) until the untrained staff have obtained training completed before a child care staff can care for children unsupervised. Trainings can be found on the PD Registry.

### **Prevention Strategies from a child care administrator and staff perspective**

**Prevention strategies to address the prevention and identification of child maltreatment are most effective when they involve building up a family's strengths.**

We believe that programs that promote a positive and responsive parent-child relationship is an essential prevention and intervention strategy. We aim to establish a helping alliance and partnership with the family is key to preventing child maltreatment. We do this by:

- Understanding the importance of outreach and community.
- **Utilizing an empowerment-based practice** We teach families how to manage the multiple stresses conditions of their lives effectively empower family members to solve their own problems and to avoid dependence on the social service system by engaging them in monthly parent support meetings. In these meetings we connect them with community resources and present on various family support topics
- **Emphasizing family strengths** We use a strengths-based orientation to address problems, and helps build on a family existing competencies and promotes healthy functioning of the family system
- Recognizing and support parents as decision-makers and leaders

- Valuing the culture and unique assets of each family
- Linking families to services and opportunities
- Furthering children’s social and emotional development
- Observing and responding to early warning signs of abuse and neglect
- Building healthy, trusting relationships with each child in your care

### **Prohibited Staff Behaviors**

Behaviors that are prohibited include (but are not limited to):

- shaking or jerking a child
- tossing a child into the air or into a crib, chair, or car seat
- pushing a child into walls, doors, or furniture

### **Strategies to assist staff members understand how to care for infants**

Staff reviews and discusses:

- The five goals and developmental indicators in the 2013 North Carolina Foundations for Early Learning and Development, [ncchildcare.nc.gov/PDF\\_forms/NC\\_Foundations.pdf](http://ncchildcare.nc.gov/PDF_forms/NC_Foundations.pdf)
- How to Care for Infants and Toddlers in Groups, the National Center for Infants, Toddlers and Families, [www.zerotothree.org/resources/77-how-to-care-for-infants-and-toddlers-in-groups](http://www.zerotothree.org/resources/77-how-to-care-for-infants-and-toddlers-in-groups)
- Including Relationship-Based Care Practices in Infant-Toddler Care: Implications for Practice and Policy, the Network of Infant/Toddler Researchers, pages 7-9, [www.acf.hhs.gov/sites/default/files/opre/nitr\\_inquire\\_may\\_2016\\_070616\\_b508compliant.pdf](http://www.acf.hhs.gov/sites/default/files/opre/nitr_inquire_may_2016_070616_b508compliant.pdf)

### **Strategies to ensure staff members understand the brain development of children up to five years of age**

All staff take training on SBS/AHT prior to employment. Training includes recognizing, responding to, and reporting child abuse, neglect, or maltreatment as well as the brain development of children up to five years of age. Staff review and discuss:

- Brain Development from Birth video, the National Center for Infants, Toddlers and Families,



[www.zerotothree.org/resources/156-brain-wonders-nurturing-healthy-brain-development-from-birth](http://www.zerotothree.org/resources/156-brain-wonders-nurturing-healthy-brain-development-from-birth)

- The Science of Early Childhood Development, Center on the Developing Child, [developingchild.harvard.edu/resources/inbrief-science-of-ecd/](http://developingchild.harvard.edu/resources/inbrief-science-of-ecd/)

#### Parent web resources

- The American Academy of Pediatrics: [www.healthychildren.org/English/safety-prevention/at-home/Pages/Abusive-Head-Trauma-Shaken-Baby-Syndrome.aspx](http://www.healthychildren.org/English/safety-prevention/at-home/Pages/Abusive-Head-Trauma-Shaken-Baby-Syndrome.aspx)
- The National Center on Shaken Baby Syndrome: <http://dontshake.org/family-resources>
- The Period of Purple Crying: <http://purplecrying.info/>

#### Facility web resources

- Caring for Our Children, Standard 3.4.4.3 Preventing and Identifying Shaken Baby Syndrome/Abusive Head Trauma, <http://cfoc.nrckids.org/StandardView.cfm?StdNum=3.4.4.3&=+>
- Preventing Shaken Baby Syndrome, the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, [http://centerforchildwelfare.fmhi.usf.edu/kb/trprev/Preventing\\_SBS\\_508-a.pdf](http://centerforchildwelfare.fmhi.usf.edu/kb/trprev/Preventing_SBS_508-a.pdf)
- Early Development & Well-Being, Zero to Three, [www.zerotothree.org/early-development](http://www.zerotothree.org/early-development)

#### Other resources

CDC developed a resource, [Preventing Child Abuse and Neglect: A Technical Package for Policy, Norm, and Programmatic Activities \[3.69 MB, 52 Pages, 508\]](#) to help states and communities use the best available evidence to prevent and reduce child abuse and neglect. This resource is available in English and [Spanish \[21 MB, 52 Pages, 508\]](#) and can impact individual behaviors and the relationship, family, school, community, and societal factors that influence risk and protective factors for violence

**The National Center on Shaken Baby Syndrome**, [www.dontshake.org](http://www.dontshake.org)  
NC DCDEE, [ncchildcare.dhhs.state.nc.us/general/mb\\_ccrulespublic.asp](http://ncchildcare.dhhs.state.nc.us/general/mb_ccrulespublic.asp)

**Shaken baby syndrome, the Mayo Clinic,**

[www.mayoclinic.org/diseases-conditions/shaken-baby-syndrome/basics/symptoms/con-200344](http://www.mayoclinic.org/diseases-conditions/shaken-baby-syndrome/basics/symptoms/con-200344)

[61](#)

**Pediatric First Aid/CPR/AED, American Red Cross,**

[www.redcross.org/images/MEDIA\\_CustomProductCatalog/m4240175\\_Pediatric\\_ready\\_reference.pdf](http://www.redcross.org/images/MEDIA_CustomProductCatalog/m4240175_Pediatric_ready_reference.pdf)

**Calming Techniques for a Crying Baby, Children's Hospital Colorado,**

[www.childrenscolorado.org/conditions-and-advice/calm-a-crying-baby/calming-techniques](http://www.childrenscolorado.org/conditions-and-advice/calm-a-crying-baby/calming-techniques)

Caring for Our Children, Standard 1.7.0.5: Stress <http://cfoc.nrckids.org/StandardView/1.7.0.5>