

Muddy Puddles Preschool and Childcare
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Welcome to Muddy Puddles Preschool and Childcare

This handbook contains information regarding the preschool/childcare program. It is very important that you read this handbook and keep it handy as long as your child is enrolled in the program. It will answer many of the questions you may have about Muddy Puddles Preschool and Childcare.

Philosophy and Goals

Muddy Puddles Preschool was established to provide quality, educational care for children 9 months old through approximately 10 years. Our staff recognizes the importance of balanced growth so they provide opportunities for mental, physical and emotional growth through a variety of creative experiences. Children are encouraged to learn and explore at their own pace in areas that interest them. We are pleased that you have chosen to include us in the growth and development of your child.

License

At the end of the handbook you will find an attachment about licensing and other valuable information. It is very important that you take the time to read this.

Admissions

A child is considered enrolled at the center only after the administrator confirms availability, the correct paperwork is filled out and returned, and the registration and tuition fees have been received. The paperwork consists of the child enrollment form, a signed tuition agreement, and a medical form. The medical form must be signed by a physician or nurse practitioner within thirty days of admission and updated every 13 months. In order to protect the health of the children enrolled at Muddy Puddles it is required that all children enrolled be immunized and provide proof or current vaccinations upon enrollment. Any changes to these forms must be reported to the office immediately.

We have a two-week trial period for any child starting. This to be sure that our center suits the needs of each child enrolled. We will disenroll children for non-

payment of fees or if the parents/guardians/family members create a threatening or unsafe situation. For withdrawal, a minimum of at least two weeks notice is required, otherwise fees will be charged two weeks from the date of notice.

Hours and Days of Operation

Muddy Puddles will be in operation Monday through Friday 7:00 am to 6:00pm. A late pick up fee of \$1.00 per child for every minute after 6:00pm will be charged. Payments go directly to the staff member that has stayed after hours. The center will be closed on the following holidays: Memorial Day, Fourth of July, Labor Day, Thanksgiving and the day after, Christmas Eve, Christmas Day and New Years Day. Full tuition is still due for the weeks in which these holidays fall.

Children enrolled at the center for four days or more a week are considered full-time. Children attending three days or less are considered part-time. Observing the agreed upon schedule is very important for maintaining our ratios. Therefore, switching days or changing hours on a daily basis is not possible.

Staff/Child Ratios and Maximum Group Size

Muddy Puddles will not exceed the following SUTQ ratios:

Infants	12-18mths.	1:4
Toddlers	18-30mths.	1:6
2 1/2-3yrs		1:7
3 yrs old		1:10
4 yrs old		1:12
School-age		1:14

The Maximum group sizes are as follows:

Infants	12
Tods (18-30mths)	14
2 -3 years	16
3 years	24
4-5 years	28
School age	14

Maximum group size is defined by the number of children in one group that may be cared for at any time. Limitations do not include naptime, lunchtime, outdoor play, or special activities.

Daily Schedules

The children's daily schedule is flexible enough to provide adaptability when necessary but structured enough to provide predictability for the children. We want them to view their school as a safe and comforting place, where they know what to expect and when to expect it.

A typical preschool day would include:

7:00-8:00	Arrival and Center time
8:00-8:30	Clean up and Breakfast
8:30-9:00	Outside Time
9:00-9:15	Greeting time
9:15-9:45	Small group time
9:50-11:30	Plan Do Review
11:30-12:00	Large Group
12:00-12:30	Lunch
12:30-2:00	Rest time
2:00-3:00	Outside Time
3:00-3:30	Large Group
3:30-4:00	Snack
4:00-6:00	Plan Do Review

Toddler Schedule:

7:00-8:30	Arrival
8:30-9:00	Breakfast
9:00-9:30	Diaper checks/Toileting older children
9:30-10:30	Circle time, weather, songs, stories
10:30-11:00	Outside play/ Indoor gross motor play
11:00-11:30	Clean-up for lunch
11:30-12:00	Lunch
12:00-12:30	Clean-up from lunch, Diaper checks, Toileting for older children
12:30-2:00	Nap, Rest time
2:00-2:30	Diaper checks, Toileting for older children
2:30-3:00	Outside
3:00-3:30	Snack time
3:30-5:00	Centers
5:00-6:00	Quiet activities, Diaper checks, Toileting for older children, departure

*Daily Programs may vary slightly for each class!

Tuition and Fees

Tuition is due on the Friday before or the Monday of the week childcare is provided. If payment is not received by Tuesday, the account is considered delinquent. A fee of \$5.00 per day will be added to the account if payment is not received on Friday or Monday. In the event of illness, full payment is expected. If any payments are more than 7 days late then there will be no care until the account is brought current.

All checks are to be made out to Muddy Puddles Preschool and Childcare. Tuition is to be placed in the wall box outside of the office. Our tax ID number is available upon request. A one-time \$50 registration fee is required. This fee is for each child enrolled. A child is not considered enrolled if the fee is not received. A \$35.00 fee will be charged for any returned checks.

Attendance and Vacations

In the event of illness or absence, the center must be notified by 10:00am. If the center is not notified of a child's absence within five days, the child is considered withdrawn and their spot will be filled. Full tuition is required for absences and illness.

On rare occasions, it may be necessary to close the center due to poor weather conditions. If circumstances should arise, watch television station channel 6 for closing information. We will also send notices via the parent notification app.

Supervision Policy

A major responsibility of the staff is to ensure the health and safety of each child entrusted in our care. Staff persons are alert to the safety needs of their children, anticipate possible hazards, and take necessary appropriate precautionary and preventative measures.

Parents are required to bring their children into the classroom and to sign the child in and out on the clipboard by the door. Any special messages, medications, special pick-up notes, etc. are to be given to the teacher. Children may not be dropped off at the entrance of the building or be sent inside alone. Staff must be made aware of each child's presence before the parent departs. At the time of pick-up, parents must make contact with the supervising teacher and sign the child out of the room, as well as in the lobby. Parents are responsible for the supervision of their child at drop off and pick-up times. No child is permitted to be passed over the playground fence for pick-up or drop off.

Muddy Puddles will only release children to adult persons on the release form provided by the parent. If an emergency arises, the parent must provide a written, signed note giving the person permission to pick-up their child. Staff will check IDs of anyone they do not recognize. Please let people know about this ahead of time, so they bring their ID and they are not offended.

Staff will not release children to anyone under the influence of drugs or alcohol. Emergency contacts will be notified to transport the child home and the police will be notified if necessary.

If there are custody issues involved with your child, you must provide the center with court papers indicating who has permission to pick up the child. The center may not deny a parent access to their child without proper documentation.

At no time will a child be left unattended. Staff will supervise children at all times, including naptime. If a child becomes ill, they may be isolated in a section of the room not being used, but within the sight and hearing of the staff member.

School-age children may run errands inside the building or use the restroom unattended if the following conditions are met:

- children are within hearing distance of their teacher
- the teacher checks on the children regularly until they return
- the restroom is for the exclusive use of the center only

Our program will operate a full day program for school-agers when school is closed for vacations, cancellations, or delays based on the Dublin City Schools Calendar.

At times it may be necessary for a child to arrive at the center from another program (ex: Head Start or Elementary school). If a child is scheduled to arrive and does not, we will first contact the parent to confirm that the child is scheduled to be at the center that day, and then contact the program that they are to have arrived from. We will then consult with the parent to determine further action. For this reason, it is of utmost importance that the parent contacts the center when their child is not going to be attending.

You will be notified when your child is ready to move up to the next classroom. As part of the procedure, center staff will develop a transition plan. This plan will include the transition period and the date the child will move up permanently. This plan will be signed by the parent and the teachers.

All staff members are mandated reporters of child abuse. If staff have suspicions that a child is being abused or neglected, they must make a report to the local children's services agency. The safety of the children is always our first concern.

Field Trips/Transportation of Children

The center will not provide transportation in emergency situations. If a child requires transportation, the parent or EMS will be contacted. The center will be providing transportation for school-age children in the summer for field trips. This transportation will be by bus and staff vehicles if necessary. Each vehicle will have a staff member trained in first aid/communicable disease, and CPR.

Before departing the center, a count will be taken of all the children and they will be marked on an attendance sheet created specifically for the trip. Upon arrival of the destination, another count will be taken. This process will be continued upon leaving the destination and returning to the center. During the course of the field trip, each staff member will have a certain group of children they are accountable for. Before any child participates in any field trip, the center will obtain written permission from the parent or guardian.

Swimming activities will be provided in the summer for our school-age children. We will take them to the Hilliard Pool occasionally. A lifeguard will be present at all times and child care staff will be actively supervising children. Parents will be provided with special permission slips, which include the ratio of staff and children for the trip that need to be signed.

Younger children will be provided with water play opportunities at the center. These include sprinklers and small wading pools (less than 24 in. Deep). Parents will be asked to sign a permission slip prior to children engaging in this type of water play. Please remember to send bathing suits, towels and sun screen for your child. Sun screen must also have an Administration of Medication form filled out. They are located in the office or classrooms.

Guidance Policy

We believe that helping children to learn self-control is very important. Our hope is that each child will learn self-discipline through careful guidance. Your child will be treated with love and respect. If children are treated with respect, they in turn learn to respect the teachers and their friends. Our expectations will be kept within the child's capabilities and the child will be made aware of these expectations.

Positive reinforcement and positive redirection will be used. A child may be asked to remove themselves from group play for a short period of time to give them a chance to regain their self-control. Removals will be age appropriate and the child will be free to return to the group when they have regained control and are not at risk of hurting themselves or others. will be age appropriate in length and done within the classroom. Staff will not impose punishments for failure to eat, sleep, or toileting accidents. This discipline policy applies to all parents and staff while they are at the center.

If the child demonstrates behavior that requires frequent extra attention from the staff member, we may choose to develop and implement a behavior management plan. This plan would be developed in consultation with the parents and would be consistent with the requirements of Rule 5101:2-12-22 OAC. Our policy is that expulsion has long term negative consequences for children and we will not ask a parent to find other child care arrangements.

We will treat all parents, guardians and family members with respect and dignity. We expect staff to be treated respectfully in return. Swearing, yelling and other types of bullying will not be allowed. If you swear at a staff member you will be asked to leave the building. If you threaten or intimidate a staff member you will be asked not to return.

Meals and Snacks

The center provides breakfast around 8:00 am, lunch around 11:30, and an afternoon snack around 3:30pm. Each of the snacks will contain at least two nutritional foods. The lunches will meet all day care licensing requirements, as well as USDA requirements for childcare lunch programs. Please let us know ahead of time if your child is not permitted to eat certain foods due to allergies or religious beliefs. All menus are posted in the lobby area of the center. We are a nut free facility. No tree nuts or peanuts are permitted in the facility. Nut based foods and foods prepared in a facility where nuts are used are also prohibited.

Napping and resting

All children ages 6 weeks to 5 years are required to have a rest period during the day. Children under the age of 18 months will rest as required by their own schedule. Children 18 months and over will rest on a cot for 90 minutes a day. They may sleep, if they do not, they will be provided with quiet activities until the rest period has ended.

Accident/Emergencies

The center has devised several procedures to follow in the event that an emergency would occur while a child is in the center's care. In the event of a fire or tornado, staff would follow the written instructions posted in each classroom describing evacuation routes, and the procedures to be followed to assure the children have arrived at the designated spot. In order to prepare children for the unlikely need to evacuate, the center does monthly fire drills. Should we need to evacuate due to fire, weather conditions, or the loss of heat, power, or water to the center, our emergency destination is 2222 Hilliard Rome Road, Hilliard, Ohio 43026. A sign will be posted on the front door of the center indicating that we have evacuated and the location where you can pick up your child. Parents will be contacted as soon as possible to come pick up their children.

There is always a staff member present that has received training in First Aid/Communicable Diseases, and CPR. In case of minor injury/accident staff will administer basic First Aid and TLC. If the injury is more serious, First Aid would be administered and the parents would be contacted immediately to assist in deciding an appropriate course of action. If any injury is life threatening, the EMS will be contacted, parents will be notified, and a staff member will accompany the child to the hospital with all the available health records. Staff may not transport children in their vehicles for an emergency, only parents or EMS. We will not enroll children whose parents choose not to grant consent for transportation in the event of a medical emergency.

An accident/injury report will be completed and given to the person picking up the child on the day of the accident or injury if the following occur: child has an illness, accident, or injury that requires first aid; child receives a bump or blow to the head; child has to be transported by EMS; or an unusual or unexpected event occurs that jeopardizes the safety of the child. If a child requires emergency transportation, a report will be available within 24 hrs.

Management of Illnesses

The center provides children with a clean and healthy environment. However, we realize that children become ill from time to time. If this is your child's first group care experience, it is possible that they may experience more frequent illnesses at the beginning, before their immune system becomes more active. We observe all children as they enter the program to quickly assess their general health. We ask that you not bring a sick child to the center. They WILL be sent home!!!!

A child with any of the following symptoms will be immediately isolated and discharged to the parent or emergency contact:

- Temp of 100 degrees F in combination with any other symptoms
- Diarrhea (more than three abnormally loose stools within a 24-hour period)
- Severe coughing (causing the child to become red in the face or make a whooping sound)
- Difficult or rapid breathing
- Yellowish skin or eyes
- Redness of the eye, obvious discharge, matted eyelashes, burning, itching
- Unusually dark urine, or grey or white stools
- Stiff neck with an elevated temperature
- Evidence of untreated lice, scabies, or other parasitic infestation
- Vomiting more than once when accompanied by any other sign of illness
- Sore throat or difficulty swallowing

Any child demonstrating signs of illness not listed above will be isolated and carefully observed for symptoms. The parent will be notified. Anytime a child is isolated, they will be kept in sight and hearing of a staff member. The cot and linens used will be washed and disinfected before being used again.

Parents will be notified by a sign on the door when children have been exposed to a communicable illness. Children will be readmitted to the center after at least 24 hours of being free of fever and other symptoms. If they are not symptom free, a doctor's note will be required stating that the child is not contagious.

The center will administer medications to a child only after the parent completes a Request for Medication form. Medications will be stored in a designated area inaccessible to children. Medications may not be stored in a child's cubby or book bag. The only exception to this requirement is for school age children that require the immediate use of an inhaler for a medical condition. Medications without a current medication form may not be left in the center. Parents must sign a release form stating that they are permitting their child to have access at all times to their inhaler. The child must keep the inhaler on his/her person at all times, it may not be stored in his/her cubby or book bag. Anytime the child is unable to maintain control of the inhaler, it must be given to the attending staff member.

Prescription medications must be in their original containers and administered in accordance to the instructions on the label. Over the counter medications must also be administered in accordance to the label. If parents request any different dosages or uses, a physician must provide written instructions on the Request for Medication

form. Over the counter medications will not be administered longer than three days without instructions from a physician.

If your child requires a food supplement or a modified diet, you must secure written instructions from your physician regarding this. Please speak with the administrator for more details regarding this.

Infant Care

All children will be fed breastmilk or formula until one year of age. It is our policy to change diapers every two hours. Diapers may be changed more frequently if required. Infants will set their own schedule and be fed on demand and sleep when tired. Our goal is to work with parents and children to have rest and nutritional needs met.

The Center will provide space for breastfeeding or pumping in our infant sleep area. Please let us know if this is an accommodation that you require.

Assessments

Children will be formally assessed upon entering the program and annually thereafter. In addition, the COR advantage will be used for ongoing assessments. Children who are not meeting development milestones will be referred to an appropriate resource for diagnosis and/ or intervention.

Transition Policy and Procedures

Families of children transitioning into the program will meet with a member of the administrative staff before the child's first day. Parents and children are given a guided tour of the center. At this time, a member of the admin staff reviews the daily schedule, curriculum, meal plan, and center policies with parents/guardians.

- Infants – Parents complete the Basic Information for Child Care form prior to their child's first day. The information is then given to the lead teacher to become familiar with the individual routine care needs including sleeping, feeding, and toileting of the child.
- Children transitioning within the center to a different classroom visit the new classroom from 9:00am – 12:00pm daily for two weeks. After the child has become familiar with the environment including the other students and teachers, he/she will be added to the roster.

- Parents are invited to schedule a time to meet their child's new teachers and visit the new classroom. The teaching staff helps parents understand the importance of planning for the transition and gives the parent/guardian tips to support their child such as discussing the change, visiting the new classroom together, and spending time in the morning with their child in the new setting.

- The transition procedures are reviewed with families at the Open House scheduled in the month of September which marks the beginning of a new school year. Parents are given an enrollment packet and Parent Handbook which include all necessary center information.

- Before children transition out of the program into the public schools, parents are offered a teacher-parent conference to review the initial developmental screening and the on-going assessment tool. Parents may request a copy of the screening and assessment at this time.

If the family requests that the child's records be transferred to a new setting, they will complete the Written Family Consent Form. The form verifies consent with the parent/guardian's signature and date. Once completed the center may release records.

Outdoor Play

Research has shown that children stay healthier when they have daily outdoor play. Based on this information and state requirements, outdoor play will be included in our program on a daily basis. We will limit the amount of time if temperatures are too hot or cold. Children will not be taken outside when the temperature (heat index and wind chill factored in) drop below 25 degrees or rise above 90 degrees. If the situation requires it, we will adjust our outdoor time due to rain, threatening weather, ozone warnings, etc. Outside play time is 30 minutes twice a day. In the event of extenuating circumstances outdoor play time may be limited to up to 10 minutes twice a day. If outdoor play is not provided, we will include a time for some indoor gross motor skills. Please send your children in the proper clothing, so they may be comfortable and safe whenever we are outdoors. This includes hats, mittens, snow pants, and boots in the winter.

Parent Participation

Parents are encouraged to participate whenever possible in the activities of the center. Parents have unlimited access to all areas of the building used for child care during hours of operation. Parents are welcome to join us for field trips, class parties, luncheons, or to just drop by for a visit. Teachers are available to discuss a child's progress at anytime. However, due to staff responsibilities and schedules, parents are asked to make appointments when it is necessary to engage in any lengthy conversations.

If parents have any questions or concerns at any time it is recommended that the following chain of command be used until an answer or solution is found:

1. Child's teacher
2. Administrator
3. Owner

Please feel free to bring up concerns when they occur. Often, they can be addressed when they are little problems, before they grow into bigger issues. The staff fully realize that you are entrusting us with the care of your little ones and we want our relationship to be a good one.

Information and Records

We recognize that children sometimes move to another early years setting before they go on to school, although many will leave our setting to enter kindergarten.

We prepare children for these transitions and involve parents and the receiving setting or school in this process. We prepare records about a child's development and learning in our setting; in order to enable smooth transitions, we share appropriate information with the receiving setting or school at transfer. Upon completion of a written consent form by the parent we will transfer records to another center.

Confidential records are shared where there have been child protection concerns according to the process required by ODJFS.

The procedure guides this process and determines what information we can and cannot share with a receiving school or setting.

Procedures:

Transfer of development records for a child moving to another early years setting or school

- Using the High Scope COR guidance and our assessment of children's development and learning, the key person will prepare a summary of achievements in the seven areas of learning and development.

- The record refers to:

any additional language spoken by the child and his or her progress in both languages;

any additional needs that have been identified or addressed by the setting;

any special needs or disability, whether an IEP was raised in respect of special needs or disability, whether there is a Statement of Special Educational Needs, and the name of the lead professional.

The record contains a summary by the key person and a summary of the parent's view of the child.

Transfer of Confidential Information

- The receiving school or setting will need to have a record of any safeguarding or child protection concerns that were raised in the setting and what was done about them.
- A summary of the concerns will be made to send to the receiving setting or school, along with the date of the last professional meeting or case conference.
- This information is posted or taken to the school or setting, addressed to the setting or school's designated person for child protection and marked as 'confidential'.

Sharing of information

The program will report child level data to ODJFS pursuant to 5101:2-17-02 of Ohio Administrative Code.

Miscellaneous

* Any nap time items are to be taken home and laundered at least every Friday.

* Feel free to send non-food treats for your child to celebrate his/her birthday with their friends.

*Parents agree not to approach staff for home-care as an alternative to the childcare provided to them at the center during the time the child is enrolled and for a period of six months after withdrawal.

*Children are not permitted to bring money, electronics, hard candy, or gum to the center.

* All children should have an extra change of weather appropriate clothes in their cubbies at all times.