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 **Parent Handbook**

**Welcome / Philosophy**

Welcome to Frosty’s Learning Academy. This handbook has been created so that there are no misunderstandings, and so that everyone is aware of the requirements of Frosty’s Learning Academy, as well as the requirements of you, the parents/guardians. This handbook covers our childcare philosophies, business policies and expectations.  Please read this handbook carefully, and feel free to discuss with myself or a staff member any questions that you may have.

Frosty’s Learning Academy is committed to creating a safe, warm, loving environment for children where they can learn and grow physically, emotionally, creatively, intellectually, and socially at their own pace. We want to help your child increase their confidence, and self esteem by treating them as unique individuals, and allowing them to express themselves in a variety of facets. We strive to make your child’s time at the center the best experience it can be for them as well as you, the parents.

We are committed to supporting families by maintaining open communication and encourage parental involvement in our programming and care activities. Our objective is to care for your child the same way you would.

In programming activities for the children we follow the State of Maine Early Childhood Education Curriculum Framework, which follows a play-based learning philosophy. We develop activities centered on stories, songs, math, fine and gross motor skills, circle time, science, music, theater, and arts/crafts. We strive to prepare your children for their early school years by exposing them regularly to letters, numbers, colors, shapes, name recognition, and new vocabulary.
**Hours of Operation**

Hours of operation are:

7:00 am – 6:00 PM.............................................................................................Monday – Friday

We will be closed on January 1st, Memorial Day, Independence Day, Labor Day, Thanksgiving, Christmas Eve and Christmas Day.

Late pick-up policy: If you are late picking up your child (after closing time) you will be charged a late pickup fee of $15 if picked up between 6:01 pm – 6:15 pm and $30 if picked-up between 6:16 pm – 6:30 pm, except in emergency situations. This late fee must be paid in cash to the staff on duty upon pick-up of your child.

 **Enrollment Requirements**

Before your child can be officially enrolled in Frosty’s Learning Academy, you must complete and provide the following documents:

* Signed Parent Contract and Rate Agreement
* Copy of Immunization Record
* Signed Consent Forms (those that are applicable)
* Non-refundable deposit (registration fee ($50) and first week’s tuition)

We do require that the parent/guardian and their child(ren) visit our center prior to enrollment. This process allows your child(ren) to become more familiar with our center and staff. If you feel it necessary, we can arrange for your child(ren) to be left in our care for 2 hours free of charge as a trial basis, before leaving them for a full day.
 **Evacuation Procedures**

In case of emergency (fire/flood/otherwise), children and staff will be evacuated to the front lawn area by the parking lot located directly in front of the Skehan Center. Contact information will be taken along with us, so you will be contacted to pick up your child at the alternate location. The location can also be contacted directly by calling Jennifer Frost at (207)852-7076.

**Payment Procedures**

Forms of payment currently accepted are cash, post-dated checks, and auto-pay bank transfer through the brightwheel app.

All fees must be paid by Monday (or the first day of care) at drop off time for the current week of services. If payment is not received by Monday at pick-up time a late payment fee will be applied to your account at the rate of $10 per day. In order to ensure accurate supplies to keep the daycare running, fees need to be on time. After 3 days of late fees added to your account your care will be suspended until fees are paid. After 3 late payments, or 2 NSF checks, fees maybe required 2 weeks in advance, or service may be suspended. Each situation is dealt with on an individual basis. An NSF or returned check is subject to a $30 administration fee.

**Registration Fee**

A one-time registration fee of $50 is required upon enrollment. This registration fee goes towards supplies for children’s artwork, as well as other supplies that we use to teach your child, as well as document that learning.

**brightwheel**

We use the brightwheel app found on Apple and Android phones (free to families) to provide real time updates for all the children. It allows parents/guardians to see uploaded photos, what the children are eating for meals and snacks, when they go potty or have their diaper changed, and various activities they do throughout the day. It allows parents to easily communicate with the staff (i.e., needed supplies, request permission to give medicine, child’s absence, will be late/picked up early, etc.). Incident reports (i.e., fell down and scraped knee) can be viewed immediately. It also allows for paperless billing and bank transfer auto-pay.

**Signing in and out/Attendance Records Policy**

Children are signed in and out by their teacher(s) in brightwheel upon their arrival and departure. We ask that if your child is not going to attend care as per usual that you inform Jennifer or message us brightwheel. This will help us plan activities for the day. When your child does not attend daycare, you must call to let us know the reason – if it is a communicable illness, we are required to record this in case of other cases breaking out. If no one answers the phone, please leave a brief message. Also, upon arrival and preparing your child for the day please help them or direct them to wash their hands before beginning to play with toys, in order to prevent the spread of germs.

If someone else will be picking up your child please let staff know upon arrival. Photo ID will be required by the person picking up your child as well if the staff member is not familiar with that person. Please let any individuals other than parents who may pick up the children that they will be asked for picture ID in order to ensure the safety of all children.

Children will not be released to unauthorized individuals. If someone shows up to pick up your child and staff was not made aware of it, we will have to contact a parent to confirm that this is in fact permitted, as well as see a picture ID of that individual to confirm their identity.

**Absences/Exclusion from Daycare**

If a child is too sick to attend daycare, please keep him/her home. There is no “sick room” at the daycare, and the best place for a child to be recuperating from an illness is at home. There are also many symptoms that a child may have that may prevent them from being able to partake in everyday activities. If your child experiences any of the following please keep them home until they are gone, or are well enough to participate in normal everyday activities:

Fever greater than or equal to 100.4 degrees F.

Excessive drainage (clear or discolored) from the mouth, nose, eyes, or ears.

Red discoloration to the whites of the eye(s).

Skin rashes as they are difficult to diagnose unless seen by a physician.

Severe abdominal pain, vomiting or diarrhoea.

A deep, hacking cough

Difficulty breathing or untreated wheezing

Yellow/green discharge from the eyes

An unusual yellow coloring of the skin or eyes

Cuts or openings on the skin that are pus-filled or oozing

Lice or nits

If your child(ren) are sent to daycare with any of the above listed symptoms, or develop during the day they will be sent home. Children should NEVER be medicated and then sent to daycare (i.e. given Tylenol to break fever). You should arrange for back-up care when your child is sick, and unfortunately there are no refunds or discounts for days that your child does not attend daycare. There are still costs associated with each childcare spot each day that unfortunately cannot be avoided if your child is not in attendance.

If your child will not be attending daycare due to illness or any other reason, please let someone at the center know as soon as possible, as well as the reason they will not be attending. This will prevent activities from being delayed.

**Child Abuse/Neglect**

If there is any abuse or neglect suspected of any children in our care, we are required to report it to Department of Health and Human Services. Please be aware also that children will NOT be released under any circumstances to impaired individuals. If we have reason to believe that any persons picking up a child is under the influence of drugs or alcohol, an emergency contact will be called to pick up the child. The incident will also have to be reported to Department of Health and Human Services.

**Clothing Code**

Children should come dressed in comfortable, season appropriate clothing that can get dirty, since some activities we do on a daily basis are messy. A spare change of clothes is required for all children in case of soiling of clothes. Children under the age of 3, and those who are potty-training require at least three changes of clothing (including socks). We want to keep your children happy and comfortable.

Children must wear sneakers in order to participate during gym time on Mondays, Wednesdays, and Fridays. If the child is not wearing the proper shoes, they will attend gym time but will not be able to participate.

Please also remember whenever weather permits the children are taken outside for 1-2 hours per day. Please ensure that you have proper outerwear provided for your child so that they are comfortable and don’t miss out on outdoor play. If a child does not have proper outdoor apparel they will have to remain indoors with another teacher/classroom. This happens all too often in the winter time because of a lack of snow pants and hats and mitts, please leave an extra pair of these items with us if you can, or be sure to bring them everyday.

**Potty Training Policies**

We strive to support your efforts of potty training at home right through the day here at daycare. However, there are some key signs to look for before we are able to help you train your child at the center. The key signs of readiness for potty training include:

* The child is able to pull down and up their pants and underwear/pull-ups on their own with little or no assistance
* The child is able to communicate to you when they need to go to the bathroom
* The child’s diaper is dry after nap times and for long periods during the day
* The child is able to hold their bowels and bladder until they get to the potty once they realize that they need to go

If these signs are not present, your child is not ready to potty train at daycare, as we cannot have a potty in each room for them to use. We will always encourage children to use the potty regularly and we begin to introduce sitting on the potty as soon as the child begins to show signs that they are ready. When your child does potty train, we ask that you provide extra clothing and remove soiled clothing daily.

**Discipline Policy**

Here at Frosty’s Learning Academy, discipline and guidance centers around respect and responsibility. Each child is expected to be a respectful, responsible member of our group. This ranges from children cleaning up their own “messes” to using manners and politeness when speaking with teacher, parents, and each other.

All “rules” centered on these respect/responsibility/safety guidelines. The only rules are those that are required to maintain a safe and respectful environment for all the children in our center.

We follow the 1-2-3 break time procedure. The child will get two warnings upon the first and second instances of the child not acting safely, or being irresponsible or disrespectful. If the child continues the action that is not acceptable, the child will receive a third strike and a break. It is explained to the child as “when you cannot be safe with yourself and your friends/when you cannot play nicely, you must step away”. The child will be removed from the group and asked to go sit in a chair by themselves, but still within the same vicinity. They will be asked to sit for a few short minutes to calm down, think about what behaviors are OK. The breaks will last the amount of time that corresponds with the child’s age (for example, if the child is 3, they will get a 3-minute time-out). Before rejoining the group, we will briefly discuss what appropriate behaviors will need to be used to be a part of the group again.

**Daily Routine**

7:00am Center Opens – Breakfast/Free Play (Table toys, puzzles, coloring, etc.)
\*\*\*Breakfast will be served by the center.

9:00 am Clean-up and Circle Time/Other Educational Activity (our learning time)

10:00 am Snack

10:30 am Educational Activities and Programming, examples include - Art, Science Experiment, Weather Chart and Story Time

11:00 am Gym/Outside Play (weather permitting) - activities include visiting local parks, going on walks, or remaining at the daycare outdoor play area

11:30 am Lunch Time

12:00 pm – 2:00 pm Rest Time

2:00 pm Snack Time

2:30 pm Centers

3:00 pm Outside Playtime (weather permitting)

4:30 pm Free Time or Quiet Story Time

6:00 pm\* Center Closes – Children must be picked up by 6pm or late charges will apply. If you need to speak to staff about any concerns you have please come in ample time to do so.

This schedule is very flexible and is adjusted according to the children’s needs and interests (i.e., if a child is engaged in art or another activity when snack is served they may finish their activity and will then be served their snack. Or, if we are engaged during scheduled “learning/circle time” the learning/circle time will just be pushed back to a later time so that we may fully engage in the current activity unit it is completed. The number one goal is learning.

**Items Needed from Home**

Nap Bedding – We provide the crib/cot sheet that they sleep on, but you must provide a blanket for them to cover up with, as well as any comfort items that they may need to sleep (blanket, pacifier, stuffed toy for age appropriate rooms, etc.)

Formula (we provide nursery water)

Diapers and Wipes

Diapers/Rash Ointment (Training pants or pull-ups for those who are potty training)

Spare Clothing – including underwear and socks, at least 3 complete sets for those potty- training age and under

Sunscreen/Sun Block

Weather appropriate clothing -  jacket/splash/snow pants/hats/mitts, boots, etc. – lack of weather appropriate clothing will prevent your child from enjoying our outdoor play time, please ensure you dress your child for outdoor play everyday.

Please ensure that children come dressed in “play” clothes.  Although we are careful while doing art and playing outside; there are instances where clothes could become dirty and stained. We appreciate your understanding and so do the children. Extra supplies can be left at the daycare and replenished when necessary, space permitting.

Children are welcome to bring toys from home to the center, but we ask that it be limited to one toy a day, and it must fit in their allotted cubby space. Children will be asked to share these toys from home with the other children. If a child does not wish to share his/her it will be put away for them until they feel like sharing. The only toys we ask that the children do not bring to the center are play guns and weapons. Thank you for your understanding.

**Snack and Meal Times**

Throughout the day water is available for the children to drink as needed. At all times during drinking and eating, children are required to be seated and not engaged in any play activity. This is to ensure safety (to avoid choking) and to promote healthy eating/drinking habits. Under no circumstances will young children be allowed to walk around or play with bottles in their mouths. Pacifiers are encouraged for use at nap time only and if your child requires a bottle at nap it will be given to him or her before they get into bed. Under no circumstances will children be allowed to go to sleep with bottles in bed. This is also to ensure safety (prevent choking) and to prevent dental problems.

**Medications**

All medications are stored in a closet that is inaccessible to children. Children are not given any medication without the parents’ written consent. Written consent may only be on a “Permission to Administer Medications” form and all medications must be in their original bottles with original labels. Staff must also indicate on the administering form the date, time and dosage of medicine given at each administration, and then initial this information.

For prescription medication, only the directions on the bottle will be accepted for administering the medication. And in all instances staff need to know when the child received his/her last dosage of the medication, to ensure medication is given at appropriate times consistently.

With any prescription antibiotics children may not return to care until they’ve had a full 24 hours of dosage, are no longer contagious and ready to participate in the full child care day, to ensure they are well on the road to recovery.

**Allergies**

All allergies (and dietary concerns) will be clearly posted in each room, on the refrigerator or cabinet and written on the child’s emergency info/consent cards.

**Developing Illness Policy**

In the event a child becomes ill during the course of the day, to the point where they are not capable of participating in regular activities, the parents/guardians will be contacted immediately and be required to come pick the child up. If the parents/guardians can’t be reached the alternate emergency contact person will be called to come pick up the child. Allergy related and common cold symptoms as well as non-communicable diseases/illnesses do not require that the child be excluded from care.

If any of the following conditions are present, it is required that children be excluded from care: Children may return to care when they are free of symptoms or are approved to return by the facility operator or in some extreme cases, by a medical doctor.

-Pain - any unexplained or undiagnosed pain

-Difficulty in breathing - wheezing or persistent cough

-Fever (100.4\* F/ 38.3\*C or higher) – child must be free from fever (without being medicated) for 24 hours before returning to care at the facility

-Sore Throat or trouble swallowing

-Infected skin or eyes (mucus/pus draining) or an undiagnosed rash

-Severe body or scalp itching

-Children with a known or suspected communicable disease/illness

-Vomiting - may return to care after 24 hours without vomiting

-Diarrhea (as defined by an increase in frequency and loosening of stool) - 2 or more times in 24 hours - may return to care after 24 hours without loose stool/diarrhea

-Just not feeling good - a child must be well enough to participate in the entire child care day to be at daycare

\*\*\*Parents are required to inform staff of any serious illness or communicable /contagious disease (with their child or within their family) within 24 hours to allow other families within the child care center to be alerted.

**Rates**

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| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Full Time- Infant | Full Time Toddler | Full Time Preschool | Afterschool Care- School in session | Afterschool Care- Vacations/Summer |
| $250/ $60 daily rate | $230/ $55 daily rate | $210/ $50 daily rate | $125/ $35 daily rate | $200/ $45 daily rate |

Tuition is due by 6pm on Fridays for the following week. Any tuition received later than the first day of the service week are subject to the $10 a day late charge and any returned checks are subject to a $30 service charge. If fee payment is more than 3 days late, all service will be suspended until fees are paid in full. Returned checks may result in cash only payment policy for future services. Full fees are due regardless of a child’s illness or statutory holidays. A receipt for fees paid throughout the year will be provided at the end of each year for tax purposes – monthly receipts are available upon request. Tuition rates are subject to increase with a minimum of two weeks notice.

Parents/guardians that use government subsidy to help pay for fees are responsible for renewing their authorization before it expires. If parents/guardians do not renew their subsidy claim before their previous claim expires the parents/guardians will be responsible for full fees until authorization is received to bill the government and have received payment. If/when back payment is received from the subsidy (for fees already paid for by the parents), the parents/guardians will be reimbursed the subsidy amount.

We do offer a family discount of 10% off the oldest child’s rate for a family of 3+. This discount does not apply to part-time rates.

**Telephone Communication**
If you need to contact the daycare for any reason, please feel free to call/text Jennifer at (207)852-7076. If you get a voicemail please leave a message, as often we are out or busy with the children and unable to get to the phone at that moment. We do check messages regularly and return phone calls as soon as we get the chance. We do not mind calls to check to see how your children are doing during the day.

If you call outside of center hours, please leave a detailed message. Someone will return your call at our next earliest convenience.

**Parent Involvement**

Our doors are always open to parents who would like to be involved in their child’s care and education. We welcome any comments or suggestions from parents about programming or the care of their children. If any parents wish to volunteer at the center, please contact Jennifer so we can make necessary arrangements.

**Photographs/Video Cameras**

We like to take lots of pictures at the daycare to share with the children, and the parents how much fun we have at daycare. We do have a few daycare photo albums that we place these pictures into on our public Facebook page. Please feel free to save the pictures of your child from this page.

**Withdrawal of Services Policy**

A **MINIMUM 2 WEEKS WRITTEN NOTICE** is required for termination of childcare services. Even if your child does not attend during that two-week period, payment is still required. Any fees not paid on time with regards to termination of child care services will also be subject to daily late fees, until full payment is received.

In the event of any concerns (raised by staff, parents/guardians or even children) a meeting can be scheduled to address the issues however, a child may be discharged immediately if they pose a severe safety concerns (i.e., repeat biting, hitting, etc.) The meeting will involve owner/operator, and involved staff member and the parents/guardians involved. The concerns will be clearly stated (ex. late payment, failure to adhere to center policies, behavioral problems etc.) and discussed. Meeting minutes will be taken, and solutions will be sought in a non-judgmental manner. A plan will be designed to resolve the issue. A second meeting will be scheduled to review the situation within a reasonable time frame. In the event the issue cannot be resolved to everyone’s satisfaction, a 2-week written notice of termination of services will be given.