

# Parent Handbook 2018-2019

## Policies and Procedures

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# *Introduction*

## **History of KidsCentre Inc.**

KidsCentre was founded over 30 years ago with the mission to provide superior early learning experiences for infant to pre-k age children in the heart of Seattle for families living and working downtown. Our mission remains to provide a high quality nurturing, engaging and early childhood educational environment. Local businessman Mick Fleming, along with his wife and partner, Drindy Gier, originally purchased KidsCentre in the late 1980's when they were looking for childcare for their daughter. They continue to be active owners and work closely with a talented and experienced team of teachers and administrators to deliver quality early childhood education to the families of downtown and greater Seattle.

## **Mission Statement**

Our mission at KidsCentre is to provide an inclusive childcare program committed to best practices in the field of early learning education, with collaborative, play-based environments designed to inspire learning and creativity.

## **Philosophy and Program Goals**

We believe the early years greatly impact the social, emotional and intellectual development of children and into adulthood. We believe in providing a creative urban learning environment that fosters individuality in learning and development. We believe in teaching life skills that prepare children for their next step into primary school as well as the rest of their lives. We regard diversity as an important element of learning, bringing diverse cultures, people, languages and backgrounds together to encourage exploration and discovery in unique and creative ways. We continually educate ourselves in the most current teaching methods to be progressive, rejecting the status quo and put great ideas into action. We take pride in our work and partner with parents to raise independent, sociable, and enlightened children. We believe in continuous dialog and the sharing of ideas, our teachers and parent's partner with each other building trusting relationships that truly support the child through their developmental growth.

Our Administration team is comprised of:

- **Kerstin Brinson– Executive Director**
- **Teresa Askew– Director of Operations**
- **Savannah Vinardell– Assistant Director-Spring Street location**
- **Ashley Matyshock-Assistant Director-Post Alley location**
- **Natoya Wycough-Manager in Training & Opening Manager-Spring Street**
- **David Cravioto-Manager in Training & Closing Manager-Post Alley**
- **Alisha Semplay-Program Specialist Spring Street & Post Alley**

Our staff is made up of diverse and creative people with a passion for teaching, a penchant for learning and an interest for building a strong community with the families at the center. When teachers and parents work together to help create a consistent home to school transition for the children, opportunities for better learning are created. KidsCentre is an equal opportunity employer and follows all applicable non-discrimination hiring laws.

We continuously strive to provide a supportive environment that attracts wonderful people that want to grow and spread their wings, in the hopes of becoming better people and better teachers. Our strong philosophy and beliefs help to always move the organization forward – striving for more and better all the time. It is this philosophy and environment that makes people want to stay and grow, helping us maintain low turnover for a more consistent environment for children and families. We also offer a highly competitive pay scale, 100% employer paid medical and dental benefits, commuter assistance program, training opportunities, and time outside the classroom for curriculum planning as incentives in our recruitment and retention efforts. Our staff is qualified both by experience and education in the care of infants, toddlers and preschoolers. They have a fundamental respect for and interest in the development of young children. Through training and continuing education, we improve our skills in nurturing and caring for young children. Our teaching staff is also prepared to support and partner with parents by answering questions concerning their children's needs, growth, and development.

## ***Admissions & Orientation***

KidsCentre accepts applications throughout the year. However, space is limited and we accept children who are listed on our waitlist first.

### **Steps to Enroll**

If you have not already visited our school, please contact one of our locations to set up a tour appointment. You will be able to meet our staff and get a feel for our centers from your tour.

Both of our schools currently have wait lists for all classrooms. You are welcome to join our wait list at any time. Please contact our Spring Street or Post Alley location and a member of our administration team will help you fill out the waiting list application, and pay the **non-refundable** \$100 waiting list fee.

One month's advance tuition payment is due upon notice (upon receiving admissions email) that you have been selected for admissions into our program. As such, this deposit is non-refundable. If your plans change and you no longer seek our services we are unable to refund this deposit as we have been holding a space for your family to join. Although we do have a waiting list, families at times need to give notice to current nanny' and/or child care centers and thus are not always able to start on the date you

may of selected. Your deposit covers the empty days that may be present in a classroom while a space is waiting to be filled.

Once your family has been officially accepted into our program and you have paid your initial deposit we will schedule your parent orientation with you. This is a wonderful opportunity for you to come in with your child for an hour and spend time in the classroom with the teachers so you can ask any first day questions, but also get a feel for the classroom.

## **Transition Period**

The purpose of the initial 60-day transition period is to give both the school and the family an opportunity to ensure that our learning environment provides the best fit for a particular child; sometimes it may take a day or two, sometimes several weeks, to make this determination.

If for any reason during this time frame, either the family or the staff consider that our school is not ideally suited to meet your child's needs, this period provides an acceptable and mutually understood way to make this known and then discontinue the process of a more permanent enrollment. If you feel that you need to adjust your schedule, or withdraw, we welcome your communication.

## **Withdrawal**

At any time during enrollment you may withdraw from our program. Parents are expected to notify us 30 days in advance if their child will be departing our program. If a parent withdraws their child from our program at the end of the month without 30-day's notice, they will be responsible for the following month's tuition. Any unpaid amounts will be collected prior to departure from our program.

## **Tuition**

As a full time child care provider, we will provide service to your family year round. Tuition is based on a full year monthly tuition schedule, thus, there is no reduction in tuition that have vacations or holidays in them (i.e. winter break).

To hold your child's position in school, we must secure tuition payment. If your family chooses to take time off (for example, a 1 month summer vacation), tuition will continue to be billed as usual. Nonpayment will signal disenrollment, and the 30 day advance notice will apply.

Each child is different and has individual needs; therefore, we structure our class sizes for the most individual attention possible. Our ratios exceed state and expert recommendations, as a result. We pledge to do our best daily to maintain our preferred lower ratios, but there will be periods of times when maintaining the lower ratio is impossible. KidsCentre will never exceed the minimum Washington State ratio.



	KidsCentre/NAC	WA State
Infant (3 months – 1 year)	1:3	1:4
Waddler (12 months – 24 months)	1:4	1:7
Toddler (24 months – 30 months)	1:5	1:7
Preschool Prep (30 months – 40 months)	1:5	1:7
Preschool (40 months – ~4 years)	1:7	1:10
Pre-K (4 years – Kindergarten)	1:8	1:10

**NOTE:** (Tuition is subject to change at any time with 30 day notice)

Monthly tuition payments are due on the 1<sup>st</sup> or no later than the 5<sup>th</sup> of every month. Tuition payments made later than the 5<sup>th</sup> will incur a \$100 late fee. We create invoices each month and email them to you directly. This provides you a monthly record of your tuition payment for tax and pre-tax flexible spending account purposes. It also provides the correct current tuition you are responsible for paying each month. Full tuition is required regardless of school closures due to holidays, vacations, in-service days, staff meetings or emergencies. We recommend you review your invoice carefully each month prior to paying tuition, to ensure accuracy of payment. We also can provide receipts of payment for your records.

Tuition payments usually qualify towards the US Federal Income Tax Credits for childcare expenses. If you will be filing a W-10, you can pick up a copy of the “Dependent Care Provider’s Identification and Certification” form at the front desk. You can also request a Fiscal Year-to-Date report of your account for the year.

**Our taxpayer identification number is 91-1307956.**

We are delighted to have several sets of siblings at KidsCentre. We give enrollment preference to siblings, but we cannot guarantee a space automatically. **Please give us at least six months notice**, if possible, and we will make every effort to make a space available for your baby/child. We also provide sibling discounts when more than one child of the same family is enrolled. The oldest child’s tuition is discounted by 10% each month. No other discount may apply while you receive a sibling discount.

- Our tuition rates are established every January and remain in effect for one calendar year.
- Tuition typically increases are between 5% to 7% cumulatively.
- **Because KidsCentre must pay its staff, rent and all other operating expenses while your child is sick, on vacation or off, we cannot issue credit or refunds for a partial month’s tuition or schedule make-up days.**

## Hours

7am-6pm Monday through Friday (except holidays and closures)

**\*\*Third Friday of every month we are closed 2 hour early for our center staff meetings.**

**\*\*\*Twice a year we are closed for a full day for Professional Development Day. Please note this day on your parent calendar as it can change year to year.**

## Attendance

As a school, we ask that all children arrive by 10am. This allows them to take part in opening activities for the day with the rest of their class. It is very disruptive for the classroom when children arrive late in the day. Please arrange any late arrivals with your administrator in advance. We completely understand and take into consideration traffic flows and things that hinder your arrival prior to the 10am cutoff, please call the center so we can update the teacher on children's arrival times as we utilize the downtown corridor for learning opportunities and your child's class may be out on an outing. KidsCentre **DOES NOT** accept drop in care, and only admits families looking for consistent early learning experiences.

## Part Time Care

KidsCentre is a primarily full time only facility. At times administration will make an executive decision to admit a part time student. This decision is based upon being able to "marry" together two children's schedule in order to create a full time space. If a family is offered a part time space, then the family will be asked to select dates of attendance and then must only attend on scheduled days. Part time students are not able to make up or sub days if absences or school closures occur.

## Absences

Please call or email [kcadministration@kidscentreinc.com](mailto:kcadministration@kidscentreinc.com) to let us know when your child will be absent for any reason. This helps their teachers plan the day, create accurate lunch counts & go on outings.

## Late Pick-Up

KidsCentre is closed at 6:00pm each day. Parents are expected to respect and observe our hours of operation, and **to be out the door by 6pm** so that we can close up on time. If you anticipate any difficulty in getting to KidsCentre before 6 pm, please make alternate arrangements for pick-up. In the event of an emergency, please call us and notify the Director.

(Effective 1/1/2017)

**Those parents arriving later than 6pm will be charged as follows:**

**\$1.00 per minute for first 10 minutes.**

**\$5.00 per minute thereafter.**

**(Effective 11/1/2018)**

It is important that we close the center on time on a regular basis as we are only licensed until 6 pm every day. Nearly all of our teachers rely on the Metro bus system for their transportation and leaving the center late means that they are missing their bus for evening jobs, classes or family responsibilities. We enforce this late fee as it is intended to discourage late pick-ups of any kind for any reason, and so that we can cover extended care and overtime pay for employees required to stay late due to a late pick-up. Of course, there are emergency situations that would not incur this fee, but all charges are at the discretion of the administration.



## Overtime Attendance Policy

The Department of Early Learning states that child(ren) should not be in attendance at the child care more than 10 hours per day. For the benefit of your child we **strongly encourage** children not to be in attendance for longer than 10 hour, but we will work with each family as needed.

## Sign-In Sheets

Located just near the entrance to each classroom, you will find daily sign-in sheets. Please enter your time of arrival and expected time of pick-up, so that we will know when to expect you and have your child ready. **Your full signature is required at both arrival and departure daily in the space provided.**

This procedure is both required by WA State DEL and critical in the case of a fire drill or emergency when we would need to know how many children are on the premises and locate them quickly.

## Safety and Security

We practice the highest standards of prevention in safety, health and security. Our facility incorporates the highest quality designs in life safety, fire protection, and security systems (electronics and sensors indoors, and direct-connect cell phones for communication when staff and children are outdoors).

## Entry Code

Our doors are locked with a security code. This code is issued to families on your first date of attendance. To gain entry; push these digits on the security panel just to the right of the front door. Only the right hand door is accessible by the code. Please remember it is important that we keep the code to current families and do not share this with family members who may be picking up, and/or other relatives. We are happy to answer the door and assist any of guests to class. Also, security is essential and thus it is equally important that the door is not held for other families, and/or guests as it is always in our best interest to allow management to ID anyone that enters the building.

## Security

Both our Spring Street and Post Alley locations have on-site security that is accessible throughout the day in the event that our centers require assistance. In addition, our neighborhood is included in the Downtown Seattle/First Avenue Association Business Improvement Area and Metropolitan Improvement District which also has its own security staff we can draw from at any time.

## Insurance

KidsCentre carries full insurance coverage including liability and accident policies.

## Earthquake Reinforcement

Our Spring Street KidsCentre is located in the Arlington building, which has been completely remodeled and updated to meet current earthquake codes. The building is reinforced with earthquake “buttons” to reinforce all floors, and the mortar has been upgraded. The property management has categorized the building as “among the best in Seattle” to stand up to an earthquake.

Our Post Alley KidsCentre is located in the Harbor Steps community which was built in the 1990's. Harbor Steps was engineered to withstand earthquakes, and was built with steel that has been reinforced to withstand high winds, and natural disasters such as an earthquake. We also practice earthquake drills once per quarter and have designated safe zones in the city for those out on walks.

## Center Disaster Plan

KidsCentre maintains a center disaster plan. A full and summarized copy is available at the front desk for review. Additionally, each new family will receive a summary copy of the KidsCentre disaster plan in their enrollment packet.

KidsCentre practices monthly fire evacuations to prepare teachers and children in the event of an emergency. We also practice quarterly Earthquake Drills, Tsunami drills, lock down and lock out drills. Our management team meets quarterly to go over the disaster plan and assess if there are any revisions that need attention to our plans. Located in both of our centers are water and food supplies that will sustain the center for 72 hours. Every classroom is outfitted with an emergency backpack that enables the teachers to leave the center if necessary as well as a rolling emergency kit that has essential supplies that can be mobile. Our playground is also outfitted with emergency kits and supplies as well. Evacuation plans are posted at the exit and in each classroom.

## Child Abuse/Neglect

KidsCentre staff is trained annually to recognize the signs of child abuse and neglect by the Council for the Prevention of Child Abuse. As required under chapter 26.44, Revised Codes of Washington, KidsCentre staff will protect children in care from child abuse, neglect or exploitation. Under this RCW, KidsCentre will notify CPS immediately if we suspected child abuse. CPS does not require prior notification of parents.

## Licensing

KidsCentre is licensed by the State of Washington and meets all health and safety standards as required by Washington State Department of Early Learning. Copies of our last three years of DEL compliance visits are available for parents to review in the front

lobby, as well as visits from the Health Dept. and our fire inspector. Our license is renewed as required.

## *Illness Guidelines*

Our Health Plan is avail at the front desk containing specific information regarding illness, exclusion guidelines, and criteria for returning to KidsCentre after an illness. We follow the state criteria for illnesses and will err on the side of caution when considering whether your child needs to be sent home.

We also maintain Individualized Health Plans for those children with asthma, severe allergies, diabetes or other such extreme health conditions. These plans are developed by the parents, pediatricians and teachers and kept on file in the classroom, as well as in the child's personal file in the Director's office.

At KidsCentre, it is our primary consideration to protect all the children in our care and our staff from unnecessary exposure to communicable disease, and to consider the well-being and comfort of all the children. We follow the guidelines of the Public Health Department for excluding children with symptoms of communicable disease, which are as follows:

- Children with mild cold symptoms who do not have any additional symptoms on the list below do not need to be excluded from day care. Chronic greenish nasal discharge, and/or a chronic cough should be seen by a health care provider.
- Children with ear infections, with or without a fever, do not need to be excluded, but the child will need to get medical treatment and follow-up. Untreated ear infections can cause permanent hearing loss.
- A child with a fever of 100 degrees or below may stay in the center as long as there are no other symptoms present, and the child is able to participate normally in the activities of the classroom.
- We use the following list of symptoms as guidelines for exclusion. The presence of these symptoms indicates a communicable disease, and is cause for a child to be excluded from daycare:
  - FEVER – a fever of 100.5 degrees or higher, even if no other symptoms are present
  - DIARRHEA – 2 or more watery stools in a 24 hour period, or two watery stools within one hour, especially if the child appears physically ill
  - VOMITING – vomiting on two or more occasions within the last 24 hours, or once with any other symptoms. This includes any vomiting episodes that happened at home prior to coming in to the center. **Children who have vomited at home should NOT attend childcare the current day or the following day.**
  - RASH – body rash, not associated with diapering, heat or allergic reactions, especially accompanied by fever or itching

- SORE THROAT – especially accompanied by fever or swollen glands in the neck
- APPEARANCE/BEHAVIOR – unusually tired, pale, lack of appetite, difficult to wake, confused or unusually irritable
- EYES – thick mucus or pus draining from the eye, or pink eye (inflamed eyelid, pink or red eyeball and drainage)
- IDENTIFIED CONTAGIOUS DISEASE – These include chicken pox, ringworm, lice, scabies, impetigo, etc. Children may not return to childcare while they are contagious.

Once it has been determined that a child needs to go home, the parents are immediately notified via e-mail or phone. You will receive an accident report stating what the child temperature was, what other symptoms they had and when they can return to school. The accident report is signed by the director, teacher and parent. In order to prevent spreading of the illness you will find your child at the front desk or in the director's office upon pick up. We realize that this may cause an inconvenience, but we must enforce this policy in order to protect the other children and staff. Please remember that while a dose of Tylenol or decongestant may relieve symptoms temporarily, it will not reduce the communicability of the child. Keeping a sick child at the center for an extended period of time dramatically increases the risk to others. We must ask that you arrange for your child to be picked up within 1 hour after you are notified.

If your child has been sent home, please observe the following guidelines to determine whether they are ready to return to KidsCentre:

- If a child has been running a fever, s/he must be completely FEVER FREE WITHOUT TYLENOL for 24 hours. Therefore, if a child is sent home on a particular day with a fever, s/he may not return to the center the next day. For the protection and comfort of all, it must be at least 24 hours after the fever has ended before the child will be allowed to return to KidsCentre.
- A child must be symptom free WITHOUT TYLENOL for 24 hours before returning to the center.
- In the case of an infection such as strep throat or pink eye, where antibiotics are required, a child may return to the center after they have been medicated for a full 24 hours.
- A child with diarrhea may return to the center when the stools are formed.

The center will follow the most conservative Public Health Guidelines in determining when a child can return to the center after an illness. For example, if the guidelines recommend that a child remain out of childcare for 24-48 hours, we will request that the child wait 48 hours. Our main concern is for the welfare of all children in our care. Records of illness will be kept on file in the Director's office.

## Medication

When prescription medication is necessary, a special form is required. You may obtain a Medication Authorization form from your child's teacher. Additional medication forms

are located at the front desk, and must be filled out to assure adequate management of the doses. Communication forms may also be used to communicate with the Director or other staff members, as necessary (face-to-face communications are always encouraged, when possible). Please feel free to stop by the office if you have a question, concern, or issue that needs to be resolved. All medication administered to children on school grounds **MUST** have a prescription label and/or the original box and packaging so appropriate dosing can be verified.

Be sure we always have complete and up-to-date information regarding your child, including:

- Parent phone numbers and contact information (including email, if that is the best way to reach you)
- Emergency contact information/medical releases
- Medical and dietary information (including any allergies or conditions requiring specialized care)
- Ongoing immunizations (report to us as given)

Please be sure to bring any medication or application which your child may require for their health and safety, such as Tylenol, cough and cold medications, etc. All children must have a signed medication authorization form which allows us to administer any medication (including sunscreen). Initial doses of medication must be administered by parent, guardian, or doctor. **Children less than two years old must have a parents and physician authorization for non-prescription as well as prescription drugs.**

## Topical Ointment

Parent/guardian must authorize staff to apply over-the-counter, topical ointments, topical teething ointment or gel, lotions and creams. Only acceptable items in their original containers and clearly labeled with the child's name will be applied.

The following items are considered topical ointments.

- Sunscreen
- Diaper Cream
- Chapstick
- Lotion
- Teething gel

Diaper creams can be soothing, however at times it can trap bacteria and mask infections that may be presenting. We respectfully request that diaper creams are only sent to school when children are showing signs of discomfort and are not kept here at school for the teachers to apply daily. All topical ointments should be in class up to a maximum of 7 days and must have a new signature each time a parent requests application.



## Medication Storage

All medication is stored in the front desk Medication Box in its original box and packaging. Medication will be stored in inaccessible cabinets or containers. If the medication is to be used during an allergic reaction/anaphylactic episode (i.e. EpiPen or Benadryl) it will be stored in the child's classroom in a locked box, or will be secured in the classroom's emergency/outside back pack, which accompanies the child outside.

## Health Statement

Within the first month of enrollment all children will need a ***Physician's Statement of Health and Ability to Participate in Group Care***. This statement certifies your child as healthy enough to fully participate in all areas of group care. Physician's statement must be on KidsCentre or health care provider's letter head.

## Emergency Care

In the event a child should have a life-threatening emergency, the staff will notify emergency personnel immediately and the child's parent as soon as possible. The decision about transportation and emergency care will be made by the EMT or by consultation with the parent, when possible. We designate Children's Hospital as our emergency treatment center, as appropriate emergency care for children in the downtown area is unavailable.

Our procedure for life threatening emergencies are as follows:

- Call 911 immediately
- Administer first aid and/or CPR as appropriate
- Notify parents or guardians
- Transport child to the hospital as appropriate (or designated hospital)
- Document emergency and notify licensing

## Parental Notification of Emergency Care

Upon enrollment, all parents are requested to give the center written permission to authorize emergency care in the event of their absence. Attempts to reach other emergency contacts will be made at the time of the incident. If no emergency contact is available, the Director or child's teacher will accompany the child and meet the parent(s) at the emergency care facility. In the absence of a parent, the Director will authorize the necessary treatment.

## Minor Emergencies or Injuries

In the event a child should have a minor injury or emergency, first aid will be administered by a staff member (as all staff members are certified in first aid). Consultation may take place between the staff, administration and our onsite school nurse. Minor injuries not requiring immediate parental notification will be reported



following care or at the end of the care giving day via a staff member and an injury report will be presented to the parent to sign.

A first aid kits are located in each classroom and in the main office at the front desk. First aid kits and emergency information is taken on all outings. Our first aid supplies are provided and checked on a regular basis by our Health and Safety Coordinator.

## **Medical Records and History**

A complete health history for each child is required upon enrollment. A current record of the child's immunizations must be presented when the child begins at the center. Periodic updates are also required with each new immunization the child receives. All forms pertaining to your child's health, including immunization reports, physician information, individualized health care plans, allergies, etc. are kept in the child's file in the Director's office. We ask that you update the health forms annually to help keep our records current for addresses, phone numbers, emergency contacts, immunization status and medical care providers.

## **Staff Health and Training**

All staff are required to be free of communicable disease while working with children. Upon hire staff are required to present a Health statement signed by their physician as well as immunizations. All staff follow the Health Department regulations for proof of tuberculin testing and food handling. Staff are also trained in First Aid and CPR annually or as needed.

## **Infection Control Policy**

Staff and children are required to wash hands before and after eating and diaper changing/toileting. Toys are disinfected daily in the Infant and Waddler rooms and weekly in the other classrooms. Each child has his/her own labeled cot and bed sheet. These sheets are washed weekly or more often, as needed. The entire center is professionally cleaned each evening. The tile floors are stripped and waxed monthly and the carpets are shampooed once a quarter. We follow the Public Health Department Guidelines on food sanitation and storage.

## **Curriculum & Programming**

We develop our curriculum with the individuality of children in mind. We build the curriculum based on various types of learning styles (visual, auditory, physical) and introduce various media, offer different opportunities and encourage particular interactions to assist children in learning through their strengths, as well as helping them develop in other areas. We value an inclusive environment that focuses on the individuality of children and creates a community of learning to support the whole family.

We also will utilize individual family service plan and individualize education plans as needed to meet the needs of children and families with disabilities and special needs.

Our curriculum is also enhanced through aspects of the play-based approach where the environment is considered the third teacher. We have an open, colorful, creative space, with classrooms that are decorated with visually pleasing photographs, children's work, and natural materials. Our teachers are also continuously learning through their interactions with the children. They observe, write journals and create portfolios for every child. These observations help the teachers explore ways of expanding on children's spontaneous activities. An academic curiosity, a social concern, or simply a serendipitous event that captures the attention of both children and teachers can trigger a learning project or an entire lesson plan. This is how we strive daily to develop our curriculum.

We take advantage of our urban location, building it into our curriculum to enhance the program with real life experiences, various cultures and hands-on learning opportunities. By experiencing places such as the Pike Place Market, the Seattle Art Museum, the Aquarium and surrounding areas, we can introduce the children to people, sights, smells, and sounds that create meaningful connections and deepen their learning.

Across the center, we also promote an anti-bias curriculum - where children are helped to develop positive concepts and attitudes about gender, race/ethnicity disabilities and different types of families. We also like to get to know each child as an individual and incorporate their home values, beliefs and experiences into our daily curriculum.

- **Infant and Waddler** – The focus in these rooms is on the emotional bonds that are vital to a child's healthy development. We use sign language for brain stimulation, as well as a means to allow pre-verbal children to communicate more effectively with the adults in their space, and vice-versa. We work on their large and small motor skill development and give them age-appropriate responsibilities to promote confidence, self-help and independence. The Waddler children go out into the city in buggies and start taking small adventures as they learn to walk on a teacher-directed rope.
- **Toddler** – These classrooms build on their verbal skills and begin to encourage independence with sensory exploration and self-help skill development. We assist the Toddlers in conflict resolution by giving them the language to navigate through their expanding social experiences. These children go on outings each day to our playground or gym and other locations throughout the city within our carefully designed boundaries.
- **Preschool and Pre-Kindergarten** – The program provides opportunities for additional hands-on learning experiences, as well as same-age and older-peer interactions. These children explore the city and continue to build on their social skills as they prepare for Kindergarten. The teachers strive to blend academic

skills like science, math, reading and writing activities into an interactive, playful, environment, so that these skills can be learned and retained more easily. Our preschool programs benefit from our weekly onsite music and soccer program.

## **Parent/Teacher Conferences**

KidsCentre will schedule two parent/teacher conferences per year. Parents can opt to have a written or face to face meeting with their child's primary teacher.

## **Guidance and Discipline**

We believe that the best way to ensure an optimal learning and playing environment is to provide the structure and program that allows learning to progress. Our goal at KidsCentre is to provide consistency through a well-planned day, a predictable schedule, clear expectations and age-appropriate activities and materials. Within the structure of the environment and program, we help children develop self-discipline and self-control in a way that will lead to increased responsibility and independence. We feel this is the basis of developing a positive self-esteem.

In our day at KidsCentre, children are given opportunities to make choices, problem-solve, socialize and build skills. We encourage them to respect themselves and others, as well as the environment. There are times for individual choices and free play, as well as times for group activities and procedures. These include a morning circle time, meal times, rest times, and outings. The safety and protection of the children is a primary concern for us. At all times of the day, children are expected to display respect for others, use self-control, cooperate with the teachers, and observe procedures which protect their safety and the safety of others.

We talk to children daily about what we expect in terms of their behavior and cooperation. We have regular routines for activities and outings, meals and naps with which the children quickly become acquainted. As children grow and change, they naturally go through ups and downs. In our interactions with them, our policy is to encourage desirable behavior through planning, support, and positive reinforcement. A child who is having difficulty cooperating or using appropriate self-control will be reminded and encouraged through positive interaction and choices. If this is not successful, redirecting the child to a different activity is used. If the behavior continues, we may help the child find something else to do until he/she is ready to behave appropriately.

If a particular problem and/or behavior is recurring or becomes serious we may take further measures to encourage cooperation, including developing a behavior management plan for that particular situation, consulting with the parents by hosting a parent-teacher conference and offering options that best suit the child and his or her development. If needed we may seek additional health care professional recommendations. At no time will corporal punishment be used or permitted on the premises.

## Accreditation

The National Accreditation Commission (NAC) has established a set of guidelines that far exceed the standards set by the state-licensing department. Accreditation is voluntary and only 2% of centers nationwide have chosen to go through this rigorous process. KidsCentre has been and continues to work towards accreditation because we believe in the importance of the higher standards that NAC recommends, including the importance of maintaining lower teacher/child ratios, particularly in the 1-3 year old range. We also believe that keeping on-going documentation and personal journals for each child enables us to provide individualized attention to your child's development – both intellectually and emotionally.

## Community Involvement

We participate in several community service activities such as Kids for Cans Food Drive once a year, the YWCA Angel tree project, Relay for Life and Union Gospel Mission which introduces and encourages children to engage in their community for the benefit of those in need.

## Clothing

Please dress your child for KidsCentre in clothes that allow freedom of movement and that are easily washable. Although we make every effort to cover children during art and sensory play, childcare activities are **messy (and FUN)**. Please bring children in clothes that can accommodate large motor activity and which you feel comfortable having them get a little paint and/or spaghetti sauce on. We cannot be held responsible for clothing messes or stains.

For safety on stairs and climbing on play equipment, both inside and outside, we suggest providing flexible, non-slippery soled shoes. Clogs, thongs, boots, slippery party shoes and some slip-ons, as well as long dresses are restrictive and potentially hazardous, and thus not appropriate daily wear for your child while at KidsCentre.

We make every effort to go outside each day. Your child's outdoor clothing should include weather appropriate items for the current day. This includes hats for warmth and rain, sweaters, jackets, and mittens for cold weather, and cool clothing, which can get wet on a hot day.

Please provide KidsCentre with an extra complete change of clean clothing for your child (including socks and underwear, if appropriate). For easy identification and loss prevention, your child's belongings need to be clearly labeled with a permanent marker. Please label all items with your child's first AND last names. Particularly for shoes, socks, coats, hats and sweaters - which may be removed several times during the day.

As a large center, with many children, we have a large and ongoing Lost and Found collection. Periodically, we put the clothes out for parents to identify after which the

clothes are donated to charity. Please let your child's teacher know if you are missing a specific item, and s/he will look for it and/or show you the lost and found area for the center.

## Daily Supplies

KidsCentre provides an individual cubby storage unit for each child. This is for your child's naptime blanket and toy, change of clothes, and other belongings. Please help keep your child's cubby neat and current by taking home out of season clothing and any other articles they may no longer require.

## Toilet Training

We find that toilet training is best begun when a child shows the interest and inclination at home. We proceed on a casual basis with children after they and their parents indicate they are prepared to begin. Once a child is potty trained, they can have a "Potty Party" with their friends, teachers and parents – celebrating their accomplishment by building confidence with positive reinforcement.

## Naptime

Rest periods are provided approximately between 12:00pm and 2:30pm for Waddlers to Pre-K. Infant naptimes are as needed and based on the child's individual schedule. Each child is provided a sleeping cot/mat and sheet for their individual use. Families may provide a small pillow, blanket and snuggling toy. KidsCentre follows Washington State DEL guidelines which states that infants cannot use blankets, snuggies, or be swaddled while in a licensed childcare center. We can use a sleep sack as an alternative while in the infant room.

## Toys from home

Children love to bring toys from home, however it can at times cause strife and hurt feelings when children are asked to share or show interest in a brand new toy. We encourage parents to refrain from bringing toys to school, as we provide many, many options for children to play throughout the day. However, there are times when teachers will schedule show and share opportunities in their room and this is the perfect opportunity to bring in a toy. Some children do need something to snuggle during naptime and this is encouraged and allowed, please just make sure that these soft stuffed animals are small enough for your child's cubby.

## Communication

At KidsCentre, we partner with parents to create an environment that feels familiar, safe and nurturing to the children. We want the children to feel comfortable to explore and learn in their own individual ways. However, we also strive to provide an environment that builds community among the parents and staff, so that parents can connect with other parents and with teachers throughout the center.



Here at KidsCentre we use a variety of different communication methods to keep parents abreast with vital information about our program.

## **Parent Information Boards**

In front of every classroom you will find a Parent Board. It will have the current menu, curriculum calendars, monthly outings and teacher outings. The team board located in our lobby is our staff board with staff pictures and a brief bio. The both boards are updated as needed.

## **Daily Reports**

A very important part of our program is our daily reports. Daily reports will be transmitted to your smart phone or desk top via our parent portal HiMama. These reports provide both important anecdotal information and logistical information about your child's day. These reports include activities, interactions, toileting and diapering schedules, food eaten throughout the day and any naps and their duration – so you know what type of activities your child was engaged in that day.

## **Parent/Staff Communications**

Our day at KidsCentre is 11 hours long, which means that all staff members are not present at all times. If you need to communicate specific information to your child's teacher regarding your child in the morning and their teacher has not yet arrived please stop by the front desk and speak to a member of management or feel free to send a HiMama message directly. Furthermore teachers will communicate regularly via daily reports, personal conversations at drop off and pick up, phone and HiMama.

KidsCentre staff and administration will always maintain strict confidentiality with regards to family/child files (locked file cabinet), child development and any personal information shared with us. KidsCentre will accommodate for translators as needed. Please do not overlook significant family changes or incidents, such as a new house or office, absences or trips, addition of a new family member, visiting guest, illness or death in the family (including pets), separation, divorce and stress. Children are acutely aware of the environment and circumstances around them, even if they do not understand them completely. We often see behavioral changes in children when their environment at home changes, and would appreciate any information which will help us help your child during times of change or stress. KidsCentre is committed to the health, security and development of each individual child. If your child has special needs, be sure to let us know. Information regarding diet alterations, health matters, sleep habits, changes at home, emotional concerns, etc. help us to help your child on an individual basis.

## **Field Trips**

KidsCentre staff plan field trips up to a month in advance. Parents will be notified of field trip via HiMama, and classroom notices. As the field trip date approaches reminders will be communicated via HiMama and also the Parent Authorization form that is by the sign in sheets at the 1<sup>st</sup> of every month.



While on a field trip staff will maintain constant contact with the center via direct connect cell phones and have an up to date first aid pack. As KidsCentre utilizes public transportation any alternate transportation needs will be provided as they direct.

## Newsletter

The KidsCentre newsletter is published every month and distributed to our staff and parents. It includes relevant developmental information, information about classroom activities, center news and events, parent reminders, community news and events, as well as current legislation affecting children and learning.

## Child File Information

KidsCentre will audit files once a year to make sure we have up to date information on shot records, up to date physicals, and current emergency contacts. You will be notified via e-mail if you need to update any parts of your child's file. The email will let you know exactly what needs updated and when to bring the document in by. Child files are securely stored in the director's office. Parents, staff, administration and regulatory officials have access to these files upon request.

## Who to talk to

KidsCentre staff understand the importance of the parent-teacher relationship to your child. We make every effort to resolve any disagreements about the program through face to face meetings with teachers, administration and/or ownership, brainstorming and conflict resolution sessions. If you have any questions or concerns you can email our Executive Director at [kbrinson@kidscentreinc.com](mailto:kbrinson@kidscentreinc.com) and she will respond accordingly.

At KidsCentre we value open communication and feedback from our parents. Any concerns that may arise can be taken to the Executive Director or one of our Assistant Directors. We will listen and work with each parent to find a resolution that works for everyone. If necessary, concerns and complaints may also be directly taken to the owner, Mick Fleming or Drindy Gier.

## Food and Nutrition

### Meals

When it comes to food, our goal is to provide healthy, balanced meals that satisfy both daily nutritional requirements and a child's discerning palate, while also being sensitive to individual needs and food allergies. We have an onsite cook who has created several healthy meals with those needs in mind. We take special care to avoid highly sensitive

foods such as peanuts and certain fish, which are not brought on premises as a safety precaution.

Meals are served family style in the older classrooms. Teachers engage children in conversations and encourage children to try a variety of foods. Children are NEVER forced to eat anything they choose not to.

Our menu is a balanced between vegetarian and meat based meals. We use dairy products, soy, eggs, chicken, and tuna in our menus. We provide a hot lunch and three snacks a day for the children and staff. Our menus are planned and reviewed by a State Nutritionist to assure required nutritional guidelines are met for all age groups. In addition, we make every effort to make our meals low in sugar and to include fresh fruits and vegetables in season. There are seasonal rotating menus posted at the front bulletin board.

- **Breakfast:** We recommend you feed your child a complete breakfast before arriving at KidsCentre. We serve a substantial morning breakfast at 9:00am that meets the WA State nutritional requirements for the breakfast meal. Most children are early risers and really need a morning meal before 9 AM. This is a two component meal meaning two varieties of food will be served (i.e. fruit and a grain, protein or a fruit).
- **Lunch:** We provide a hot and nutritious lunch that meets the WA State nutritional requirements for a full meal and includes a main dish (protein), milk, fruits and vegetables. This is a four component meal (i.e fruit, vegetable, protein and grain or dairy)
- **Snacks:** KidsCentre provides a two component snack that meets the WA State nutritional requirements for a snack twice in the afternoon. Once after nap and at 5:00 PM. These snacks may include fresh vegetables, fruits, dairy and a source of protein presented in a way which offers variety in colors, textures, and tastes. Both afternoon snacks are a two component meal.

## Infant Formula and Foods

Because infants have a wide variety of preferences and needs, infant students are required to bring formula or breast milk bottles from home. This allows parents the autonomy to be able to make and provide nutritional decisions. **We ask that all bottles are labeled with first and last name, content, ounces and dated daily.** At the end of each day please take your used bottles home to be washed and sanitized.

Infant food for older babies is prepared fresh daily in our kitchen. The nutritional menu for infants is based on the gradual introduction of appropriate foods at the proper stage of the infant's development, in agreement with instructions from the parent and pediatrician. We will not introduce any new foods to your child that you haven't already introduced at home. We ask that you fill out a "Foods Tried" form for your child when you have begun feeding your child solid foods. This allows us to know what your child has tried and what foods to avoid when feeding your child at mealtime. The fruits and

vegetables for the infants are pureed for the smaller babies and served chopped or in larger pieces for the older infants. Parents should supply any specific foods not on the menu that may be desired. If you would like your child to eat certain foods daily, please make arrangements with your teacher to bring these into school each day labeled so we can make sure they are going to the correct student.

Cow's milk will not be fed to infants less than 12 months.

Whole milk is served to children less than 24 months unless recommended by health care provider.

## Allergies/Special Dietary Needs

Since a small percentage of children sometimes have special dietary needs due to food allergies or sensitivities, we recommend that parents carefully and closely review the menu so they know when to bring alternate foods for their child. Our cook does not prepare individual meals. However, we will monitor your child's diet as requested by you and your doctor to ensure that the child is not exposed to those foods they are allergic to. For all outside meal substitutions we require an Individualized Health Plan signed by your child's pediatrician that outlines the need for and steps necessary if your child has an allergic reaction to the identified substance. This form will be kept both in your child's classroom and their individual file for reference. All outside foods brought in must be based on allergies/special dietary need identified by your pediatrician. **We ask that any outside food brought for special dietary or allergy needs matches the menu items for that day.**

## Special Events and Outside food items

At KidsCentre we like to celebrate special holidays and/or birthdays. Food items brought from outside must be store bought and must have a label so ingredients can be identified. Additionally, all foods brought from outside **must** be peanut and peanut oil free. In order for KidsCentre to communicate all special outside food items to all families, please inform the KidsCentre administration prior to bringing any outside food items in as this allows us the opportunity to assess ingredients/labels so we can ensure there are no allergies or ingredients that could put children at risk.

## *Important Information for Parents to Know*

### Holidays & Celebrations

We use an Anti-Bias curriculum that focuses on all races, religions and customs. At holiday times, we focus on seasonal changes and social customs. Since KidsCentre is not affiliated with any religious organization, we acknowledge different religious holidays that children celebrate with their families, or that may be celebrated in other countries. This is reflected in the special art projects that the children are invited to do, the music and movement programs, and our menus. If you wish to celebrate your child's birthday

with their class in some special way, please talk with your child's teacher. Because some children are sensitive to sugar, we discourage very sweet party foods. Please ask for alternative suggestions if you would like to bring some refreshments for the class. If you do bring store-bought or pre-packaged food into the center, we ask that you carefully review the ingredients contained in the food in order to ensure that the product does not contain trace amounts of nuts or is not manufactured or packaged in an area that processes foods with nuts. We take this precaution due to serious allergic reactions caused by nuts of all kinds.

## **Babysitting Policy**

KidsCentre does not endorse or recommend any staff person for private in-home childcare arrangements and is not responsible or liable for it. If you enter into an arrangement with our staff it may not interfere with their employment at our organization, and you and the staff person will be asked to sign a waiver.

## **“Ouch Report” Policy**

If a child becomes injured or hurt another (even minor) while at school, we write a quick report summarizing what occurred. This will be sent home at the end of the day. KidsCentre has a company policy that any injury to a child's head, parents are immediately notified so the parents can assess the situation further. In the event of a serious injury, you will be notified immediately via phone call to the parents.

## **Peanut Free Facility Policy**

Due to the severe life threatening peanut allergy suffered by some children, KidCentre is a “Peanut Free” Center. This means that all foods containing peanut products have been eliminated from any meals or snacks. We carefully monitor all of our recipes and ingredients to make sure that they are peanut free. We also use a Sun Nut Butter as a appropriate substitution.

## **Pesticide Policy**

KidsCentre will always use safe, organic, earth friendly products for weed and pest control on our playground and within the center.

## **Snow Policy**

We will make every attempt to stay open and service you. However, in the case of snow please check your email often as we will use our Himama portal as a communication tool with families. This is the primary way we will notify you of a school closure, late start etc. Note that:

- If a snowstorm or inclement weather hits mid-day, parents are called in advance to start picking up children early. This is determined by working with administration who stays abreast with weather forecasts within the Seattle region.

- On a snow day, even if we are open we may not be able to be at full capacity because of licensing ratios and the possibility that staff may not be able to make it to work. Expect communication from the Executive Director in this case. Snow days are not made up on a later date, nor is tuition discounted.

## Disenrollment Policy

KidsCentre is committed to providing exceptional child care for all of our families. We seek to provide programs designed to foster opportunities for the development of social and emotional skills, gross and fine motor skills, and perceptual and cognitive readiness. We acknowledge each child as an individual who possesses a unique learning style and a way of responding to the world around them. Given the diversity of the families and communities that we serve, it is a priority that we recognize and appreciate the characteristics and behaviors that each child and family brings to our center.

KidsCentre strives to create a partnership with our families as a basis for their children's success within our center. Because KidsCentre has a child-centered/family approach and seeks to accommodate a wide range of individual differences, it is only on rare occasions that a child's/family's behavior may warrant the need to find a more suitable setting for their child.

The decision to disenroll a child from KidsCentre is a difficult one for both the center and the family. In all cases, KidsCentre's goal is to act thoughtfully and thoroughly to communicate, address and resolve concerns relating to the children in our care. Center staff will attempt to work with a family to take constructive steps to finding a solution that resolves the problem(s), before a disenrollment occurs.

When a child's teacher or an administrator has concerns about a child's behavior or other circumstances, s/he will document such concerns as soon as they arise. The Center will inform and involve the child's parent/guardian by notes, phone calls, and meetings, as necessary, to establish a collaborative environment.

If the child's behavior is problematic, a review of that behavior using the child's developmental profile and assessment tools will aid in understanding the behavior in its appropriate context. This review includes input from a number of teachers and administrators, so that checks and balances are used to analyze the problem.

As the Center develops strategies to address a child's particular problem, a variety of options should be considered, including:

- changes to the physical environment
- the daily structure of activities
- consistency
- transition times
- redirection

Similarly, teachers' expectations, home interactions, and intervention techniques should be evaluated and changed to adapt to the particular circumstances. Whenever possible and appropriate, efforts will be made to help a family understand how they can support the plan at home or encourage a resolution by adjusting their interactions or expectations for a child. Literature and other support resources regarding methods of improving behavior will be provided to the family, if available.



Lines of communication with parents will be established, and parent conferences will be conducted to review the problematic behaviors, the strategies implemented to resolve them (and their relative success) and the possibility of disenrollment if the behaviors are not resolved. It is the Center's ultimate goal to provide the parents sufficient time to take the necessary corrective action to allow the child to remain at the Center and to provide them with sufficient notice of the potential for disenrollment, so they can secure alternative care.

When appropriate, we may suggest an evaluation by a professional consultant to come in and observe the child in the environment. In some cases, it may be appropriate for the child to be assessed by the local school district child study team.

Ultimately, Center personnel may attempt a number of approaches before making the final decision to disenroll a child from the center.

## **Non-Discrimination Policy**

- **Children and Families**

Children and families are welcome at KidsCentre without regard for race, color, sex, religion, age, marital status, national origin, the presence of any sensory, mental or physical disability, veteran status, sexual orientation or any other basis prohibited by applicable Federal, State or local laws. All families are able and encouraged to volunteer in the center and offer knowledge about their families' interests and customs.

- **Staff and Facility**

KidsCentre is an equal opportunity employer and adheres to all applicable State and Federal Non-discrimination employment laws. KidsCentre does not discriminate on the basis of race, color, national origin, religion, sex, disability, honorably-discharged veteran or military status, sexual orientation, or age.

All persons to enter premise must adhere to KidsCentre anti-harassment and discrimination policies. If harassment or discrimination occurs, report immediately, and in private, to Director, front desk personnel, or owner.

## **Sexual Harassment Policy**

Sexual harassment is a form of discriminatory behavior. No parent shall be subjected to or commit unwelcome verbal or physical advances, or any other conduct that could be interpreted as harassment. Harassment based on other unlawful discrimination, like race or religion, is also not tolerated.



## Smoke-free/Substance Free Environment

KidsCentre considers a child's safety of utmost importance. If parents or other appointed adult who picks up a child appears to have been drinking alcohol or using drugs, we will:

1. Talk to the adult
2. Ask permission to call a cab or offer another person on the authorized pick up list.
3. Volunteer to call a cab or offer other transportation assistance
4. If all offers are refused, KidsCentre administration will contact law enforcement and Child Protective Services to notify them of potential dangers.

A smoke-free environment is maintained at KidsCentre for the safety, health and welfare of all concerned.

## Parent Handbook Acknowledgment

I have read and understand KidsCentre handbook as it relates to the following information:

- Policies and procedures of enrolled families, including the dynamics of the facility and staff.
- Curriculum and communication procedures and policies.
- I understand and acknowledge that I have read and understand the transition period, behavior management guidelines & disenrollment policy.
- KidsCentre's educational and program philosophy and facility environment.
- KidsCentre will advise parents on their child(rens) progress and any issue related to the child's care and individual practices concerning children with special needs.
- I understand that parents are encouraged to participate within their child's specific classroom as well as with center wide activities.

I acknowledge I have read and understand the Parent Handbook.  
(At least one signature is required)

Printed Name:

Printed Name:

Signature:

Signature:

Date:

Date: