



# Family Handbook



High Quality Education Programs  
for Young Children

### **Mission Statement:**

Serendipity's mission is to provide superior care and education, while enriching children's lives.

### **Vision Statement:**

"Serendipity Children's Center is a quality environment where children and families are valued for their individuality. Children are safe to express themselves through their wonder, curiosity, growth and play. Families are recognized as their child's first and most important teacher."

### **Core Values:**

**PERSONAL CHILD DEVELOPMENT:** We hold an understanding and respect that all children grow, learn, and develop in unique patterns. With this knowledge we feel that it is important to provide constructive, supportive, and honest feedback.

**ENVIRONMENT:** Serendipity Children's Center is a comfortable, nurturing environment that enables us to offer excitement and a challenging eagerness for children to learn.

**CURRICULUM:** Our curriculum provides core learning skills, and the opportunity to maximize each child's potential growth. By working in groups and independently with materials, we are able to offer learning that is meaningful to children. The content of the curriculum utilizes the strengths and interests of our staff, providing the enjoyment of teaching, and positive interactions between staff and children. We also believe in flexibility of approach, resources, scheduling, and content. While all of this is important, allowing time for creativity, performing arts, and preparation for the future is our goal.

**PARENT, TEACHER, and FACULTY SUPPORT:** When open communication is encouraged between home and center, the best care possible for the children is obtained. A partnership between everyone involved that includes respect, thoughtfulness, empathy, and responsibility for self and others, creates the best care available for the children and their families.

### **Program Philosophy:**

We believe that children need a stimulating environment that encourages learning and socialization through developmentally appropriate activities to create a positive foundation for future academic and social development. We provide a loving and nurturing environment that encourages play based exploration and learning for children at a time when they are learning so much about themselves and the world around them. We value diversity and welcome families of all ethnic, cultural, religious and socio-economic backgrounds. Our program is child centered emphasizing a developmental, hands on approach to learning. With nurturing and individual guidance we offer each child the opportunity to participate in a balanced program covering areas such as emotional, intellectual, physical and social growth. We ensure each child feels safe, secure, happy, and is nurtured in an environment created to encourage positive self-esteem and learning through play.



### **All Inclusive:**

This handbook is not meant to be all inclusive. Serendipity Children's Center Inc. reserves the right to change this parent handbook at its sole discretion.

### **Allergies:**

Children with:

- Diagnosed allergies must have a doctor's note on file before enrolled
- Reactions (hay fever) do not need a doctor's note.

Any type of allergies is posted in the classroom in a confidential location, with a picture of the child.

Each classroom has an allergy chart for the children located in their room. The center has a main allergy chart located in the kitchen that the cook will refer to when preparing meals for the children. The allergy chart will list the child's name, their classroom (main chart), the allergy, a picture of the child, and the reaction to these things, and what to do in case of accidental ingestion.

### **Asthma:**

Children with Asthma:

- Must have an inhaler with all information documented and on file from the doctor before enrolled.
- May be given a nebulizer treatment no more than 3 times a day by teachers.
- Must be able to participate in activities indoors and outdoors in order to attend.

### **Attendance:**

We feel that attendance is very important to the social and emotional development of your children. We do expect you to call the center when running late or your child will be absent.

### **Administrative:**

Serendipity Children's Center, Inc. administrative staff, including the Center Director and billing department may not always be available when you pick up or drop off your children. Please leave a written message with one of the staff members, or when you call you can leave a message as well. Administrative staff will return your message within 24-48 hours.

### **Accident Reports:**

See Incident Reports

### **Arrival Procedures:**

Serendipity Children's Center, Inc. opens at 6:30 a.m. and closes at 6:30 p.m. Monday through Friday. Your child's arrival is appreciated by 9:00 a.m. when their school day learning begins.

Upon arrival at Serendipity Children's Center, state law requires that parents sign their child in using their full legal signature. This is completed using your individual code in the Brightwheel system. Children are required to be escorted by their parent or the adult dropping them off, to their designated classroom. Children and adults must wash their hands upon entering the center. Parents are responsible for helping their child wash their hand at the time of arrival. Children are required by law to be supervised at all times

while in the child care facility. Parents are expected to help children put away their outerwear and any other personal belongings and get settled for the day.

Parents are required to notify the child's teacher of any special instructions or needs for the child's day. These special instructions include but are not limited to early pick up, alternative pick up person, health issues over the previous night which need to be observed and/or any general issues of concern of which the staff should be aware. You can do this verbally with staff, digitally with the Brightwheel App or write in our communication log located in the sign in/out area.

Serendipity Children's Center, Inc. discourages parents from sneaking out of the center. Some children exhibit separation anxiety when it is time for their parent to leave. Serendipity Children's Center, Inc., believes it is best for parents to tell the anxious child upon arrival that after all of the child's things are put away, the parent will kiss, hug and say goodbye to the child. This will prepare the child for their departure. The employee present in the classroom will comfort and assist the child through the anxious time. Parents are asked to leave after saying goodbye. The longer the parent of an anxious child drags out the departure, the more anxiety the child is likely to feel. The professional employees of Serendipity Children's Center, Inc. are available to discuss other options if the child does not settle into the arrival routine after a reasonable period of time.

Serendipity Children's Center, Inc. does not accept children in diapers or pull ups that were worn overnight and are heavily soiled.

At arrival, parents are required to follow the Medication Policy if a child must receive medication during the course of the day.

#### **Absence:**

If your child will not be at the center on a scheduled day please inform the center by 9:00a.m. This will enable the center to more effectively maintain appropriate ratios and help the classroom teacher effectively plan for the day.

If your child is ill, we request that you notify the Center Director not only of the absence, but also of the nature of the illness. This enables our staff to keep track of any illnesses which may occur at our center. This information will only be shared with staff on a "need to know" basis. If your child has a communicable disease, we ask that you share the diagnosis with the Center Director, so that the parents of the children in the center may be notified that a communicable disease is present. Once again, only the communicable disease information will be shared. Serendipity Children's Center, Inc. will take all measures necessary to protect your child's confidentiality. Parents are not required to disclose this information by law, and your continued enrollment will not be based whatsoever on your decision to share (or not) the reason for your child's absence from school. Parents who know in advance that a child will be late, are required to notify the center by 9:00am so as to maintain the appropriate number of employees to ensure ratios are met when the child arrives to school.

#### **Agency's Right To Refuse Admission:**

Serendipity Children's Center, Inc. reserves the right to refuse admission to any child at any time with or without cause.

Possible reasons for the refusal of admission include but are not limited to:

- Lack of staff to maintain appropriate Staff to Child Ratios as determined by State Licensing Regulations.
- The need to maintain compliance with Licensing Regulations.
- Staff deems the child too ill to attend.

- Domestic situations that present a safety risk to the child, staff or other children enrolled at Serendipity Children’s Center, Inc. if the child were to be present at the center.
- Parents failure to maintain accurate, up to date records.
- Parents’ failure to complete and return required documentation in a timely fashion.
- Financial obligations are 3 or more days late

Parents WILL NOT be reimbursed tuition for days when their child is refused admission to the program.

### **Alternate Pick Up:**

At enrollment, parents will be presented with an Emergency/Alternate Pick-up form. Parents are encouraged to include on this form any and all persons who, in the course of events, may at one time be asked to pick-up their child from Serendipity Children’s Center, Inc. In an emergency situation the child’s parents will be called first. If they cannot be reached staff will call the persons listed on this form until someone can be reached. Should the staff contact a parent and the parent is unable to pick up the child, it is then the responsibility of the parent to arrange for their child to be picked up by someone on the emergency list. Failure of the parent to make such arrangements will result in dismissal from the program. Parents do not need to be listed on the Emergency Contact Form. The nature of the parental relationship affords the parents (in the absence of a court order indicating otherwise) the right to pick-up their child. Parents will be asked to determine which persons (if any) on the Emergency/Alternate Pick-up form have the right to act “In Loco Parentis.” In Loco Parentis status affords the pickup person the right to discuss confidential information about the child’s day including but not limited to incident/accident reports and behavior issues. In the absence of this designation the people on the Emergency/Alternate Pick Up Form are only afforded the right to pick up the child. Staff is not permitted to discuss the child’s day with them.

The persons on the Emergency/Alternate pick-up form will be required to provide Government issued photo ID prior to the agency releasing the child. There will be no exceptions to this rule.

All changes and/or additions to the Emergency/Alternate Pick-up form must be made in writing and be dated and signed. Only custodial parents have the right to make changes or additions to this form. Serendipity Children’s Center, Inc., reserves the right to refuse/ban any person listed on the Emergency/Alternate Contact Form for any reason, including but not limited to violations of the policies/procedures contained herein. It is the responsibility of the enrolling parent(s) to inform each person on the Emergency/Alternate Form of the policies/procedures contained herein.

### **Assessments:**

Teachers document observations and take pictures of children on a continuous basis. Through this process, your child’s language, physical, social, emotional, fine motor and gross motor skills are evaluated. Within 45 days of enrollment, an assessment is conducted on your child. If a concern has been observed or discussed previously, a conference may be set-up to talk about a plan of action. As a center, we partner with all families to achieve support from outside agencies to address the needs of all children who show social, emotional or physical concern. Please see Serendipity Children’s Center, Inc. Program Assessment at the end of the handbook.

### **Assessment Tools:**

*Ages and Stages* is a questionnaire designed to screen young children who are in need of further evaluation and those who appear to be developing typically (Children ages 4mo – 5yrs). This assessment is used for children in the infant and one year old classrooms to track development through the year.

For our older students, we use a comprehensive “report card” assessment designed in accordance with *The National Association for the Education of Young Children* (NAEYC) standards. This assessment tracks the

progress of your child in meeting a well-rounded range of objectives, including social-emotional, physical, cognitive, English language, literacy, and math skills development.

### **Appointments:**

If you need to set up an appointment with your child's teacher, please contact the teacher to set up a time outside of when they are responsible for watching a group of children. Appointments may be done on the phone as well outside of the teacher's responsibility to the children. Teachers are unable to have lengthy conversations at the time of pick up or drop off. Please remember that they are responsible to care for a group of children during working hours. Management can also help facilitate scheduling appointments with teaching staff.

### **Alternate Safe Locations:**

Should the administration of Serendipity Children's Center or any emergency services personnel determine a building too dangerous to be occupied, the staff and children will be taken to an alternate location. This could be any of the Serendipity buildings, or an alternate safe location depending on the situation. See Emergency Card Information for more information. Once children are assembled here, the staff will begin contacting parents or emergency contact persons for pick up. As stated before, children must be picked up within 45 minutes of the telephone call.

### **Attorney:**

At any time that Serendipity Children's Center, Inc must use an attorney or collection agency to collect fees, you agree to pay all reasonable attorney fees costs.



### **Building Security:**

All visitors/volunteers must sign in at the office or the classroom being visited. Please check in with teachers, and then sign the Visitors/Volunteers Log. You will then be given a visitor badge. Please wear a visitor badge at all times. All staff are aware of any individuals that are not allowed on the property or that may have a restraining order. All main points of entry to Serendipity programs are either locked from the outside or have secure locking keypads for entry. Codes shouldn't be shared for security reasons.

### **Biting Policy:**

The staff of Serendipity Children's Center, Inc understands that it is not uncommon for young children to go through periods of biting. Biting occurs for a variety of reasons. Some of the most common reasons young children bite are due to teething, a lack of ability to communicate, frustration, being overly tired or overly hungry, and or the need for more attention. It is not uncommon for children in the age range of 6 months - 36 months (and older) to either bite or be bitten at some point (often more than once) while in a childcare setting.

Our teachers and administration work closely and quickly to extinguish this undesirable behavior by following these guidelines for children who have been *identified as having a biting habit*.

- Parents are expected to work with staff to identify methods and strategies to curb this behavior. Uncooperative parents will have their child's services terminated.
- Understanding the child as a whole and recognizing what outside factors and circumstances influenced the behavior.
- Talking with the child about the effects and cause of their actions and if there is a need to, temporarily removing them from the classroom.
- If the child bites three or more times within a four hour time frame, the parent will be called and required to remove the child from the center for the day. If the staff feels that the child

- needs to be removed from the center over one bite, the parents will be called and asked to remove the child from the center for the day.
- If the child has been required to leave the facility for the aforementioned reason twice within a five day period, a parent / teacher/ director conference will be held. During this conference, a formal plan of action will be developed.
  - After this meeting if improvement is not seen, the parent may be required to temporarily withdraw the child from the center.
  - After the child has been temporarily withdrawn and returns to the center without improvement the child may be required to dis-enroll from the center.
  - Depending on the severity of the biting incident you may be called every time your child bites.

The staff may not discuss with either parent the identity of the other child involved in the incident. This information is considered to be confidential and cannot be disclosed. The staff of Serendipity Children's Center cannot discuss the medical history of any child involved in a biting incident with the other party. It is recommended that any child involved in a biting incident be seen by their family physician if the parents are concerned about communicable diseases possibly resulting from the biting incident.

### **Birthday Celebrations:**

Serendipity Children's Center, Inc. welcomes birthday celebrations! We understand that all families may not want to participate in celebrations. Let the Center Director know if you would like your child to join a different activity during birthday celebrations.

Please contact the staff when your child's birthday is approaching, in order to plan the timing of the celebration to best fit your schedule and the schedule of the classroom.

Families can choose to send a birthday snack to school for all the children in the class however this snack cannot be homemade; food must be purchased and in its original packaging. All food must be peanut and tree-nut free.

### **Breast Feeding:**

We support mothers who are breastfeeding and will coordinate a schedule based on the needs of you and your infant. Breast milk needs to be labeled with the child's name and date and brought in sanitary containers. Defrosted breast milk can be stored for 24 hours. Frozen breast milk can be stored for up to two weeks in our freezer. Once warmed breast milk is gently mixed not shaken. We have an open door policy and mothers are welcome to come and breast feed at school. Comfortable accommodations will be made for these parents to feed at Serendipity based on the preferences of the parent.

### **Bounced Check Charges:**

There will be a \$35.00 fee charged for tuition checks returned by the bank. Returned tuition checks will not be redeposited. Parents will be responsible for reissuing cash, money order, or cashier's check. If at any future time the bank returns a parent's check, all future tuition payments must be made by cash, certified check or money order.



### **Car Seats:**

Children less than 4ft 9in are required to ride in a car seat/booster. If needed on a field trip, parents are required to provide their child's car seat/booster. Serendipity Children's Center, Inc. will not supply a car seat/ booster for field trips. If a child does not have their car seat/booster they will not be able to attend the field trip. Child safety-restraints will be used according to manufacturer's instructions. Serendipity

Children's Center Inc. does not keep extra car seats/boosters and will not have any for families to borrow. If you need to leave a car seat/booster for the person picking up your child, please speak with teachers or management to find the most convenient location to store these seats.

### **Closures / Calendars:**

Serendipity Children's Center is closed for the following holidays/teacher in-service days:

- New Year's Day\*
- Martin Luther King Jr. Day
- President's Day
- Friday before Memorial Day for teacher training
- Memorial Day
- Independence Day\*
- The last Thursday and Friday of the month of August prior to Labor Day
- Labor Day
- Veteran's Day
- Thanksgiving Day and the day after
- Christmas Eve and Christmas Day \*

\*Monday and/or Friday will be closed if this holiday falls on a weekend.

### **Children's Files:**

Records are kept for one year on site after a child withdraws from the program.

- The Center Director has access to the children's files that are kept in a locking filing cabinet in the office.
- Auditors and the Center Licensor have access to files in the accordance with Washington state laws.
- Unauthorized individuals will not be given access to the children's files without court documentation or parental consent.
- The child's parent or legal guardian has access to the file upon request. At the time of enrollment or re-enrollment the parent or legal guardian may authorize other individuals to have access to the child's file, including health documents.

### **Child Abuse and Neglect:**

Under the Child Protective Services Act, all licensed child care providers are 'mandated reporters' and they are legally required to report any reasonable suspicion of abuse or neglect to the appropriate authorities. The employees of Serendipity Children's Center, Inc. are not required to discuss their suspicions with parents prior to reporting the matter to the authorities, nor are they required to investigate the cause of any suspicious marks, behavior or condition prior to making a report. Mandated reporters can be held criminally responsible if they fail to report suspected abuse or neglect. We at Serendipity Children's Center, Inc. take this responsibility very seriously. The Child Protective Services Act is designed to protect the welfare and best interest of all children. By law mandated reporters cannot be held liable for good faith reports made to Child Protective Services which are later determined to be unfounded.

Any adult who is considered a threat to a child's physical well-being will not be notified when a CPS report is made. Children are never terminated due to CPS reports. We work at partnering with the parents and CPS to support the needs of the child/ren and family. Any adult who smells like alcohol, appears to be intoxicated (slurring words), or appears to be impaired in any way will NOT be permitted to pick up a child/ren. If adult persists, the Police will be called and termination of care may occur.

### **Care Over 10 Hours:**

Serendipity Children's Center allows children to be in care a maximum of 10 hours daily. If care is needed outside of the 10 hour window, there will need to be special accommodations worked out with

management. A letter from your employer stating the reason why child care is needed for more than 10 hours will be required.

### **Court Orders Affecting Enrolled Children:**

In cases where the child is the subject of a court order (e.g., Custody Order, Restraining Order, or Protection from Abuse Order) Serendipity Children's Center must be provided with a Certified Copy of the most recent order and all amendments thereto. The orders of the court will be strictly followed unless the custodial parent(s) requests a more liberal variation of the order in writing. In the case where both parents are afforded shared/joint custody by order of the court, both parents must sign the request for more liberal interpretation of the order.

In the absence of a court order on file with Serendipity Children's Center, Inc, both parents shall be afforded equal access to their child as stipulated by law. Serendipity Children's Center, Inc. cannot, without a court order, limit the access of a one parent by request of the other parent, regardless of the reason. If a situation presents itself where one parent does not want the other parent to have access to their child, Serendipity Children's Center, Inc. suggests that the parent keep the child with them until a court order is issued, since our rights to retain your child are secondary to the other parent's right to immediate access. Serendipity Children's Center, Inc. staff will contact the local police should a conflict arise.

### **Curriculum Philosophy Information:**

Infant – Pre-Kindergarten children learn from concrete to abstract, not the other way around. The primary vehicles through which young children learn are exploration, discovery and play in a classroom environment that has been carefully planned to be conducive to meaningful learning. Children explore the world around them by using all their senses (touching, tasting, listening, smelling, and looking). Using real materials such as blocks, for example, supports a concrete understanding about size, shape, color, balance, symmetry, design aesthetic and more. Play is the work of young children that provides a solid foundation for academic learning. It is the groundwork children need to understand abstract concepts and symbols such as letters (which are symbols for sounds) and numbers (which are symbols for quantity). Our curriculum is written to use the alphabet as the basis of building curriculum in all areas of learning. We support children to become confident, enthusiastic learners by encouraging them to take initiative to create, explore, try out ideas and trust themselves as competent learners. This sets the stage for success in school and in life. Serendipity's curricular approach identifies goals in all areas of children's development:

- Social: To help children feel good about themselves in the context of being part of a group, and to play and learn cooperatively with others.
- Emotional: To help children develop confidence, independence, self-control, and a positive attitude.
- Cognitive: To help children develop skills in the areas of language and literacy, math and science, art and creativity, analytical thinking, creative problem solving and more.
- Physical: To help children increase their large and small muscle strength, stamina and coordination and an enjoyment of physical activity.

Serendipity Children's Center, Inc. is committed to anti-bias education to create a welcoming, safe, and inclusive learning environment. We strive to create a program that reflects the lives of our families, staff, and communities. Our curriculum supports children to develop and strengthen individual and group identities and interact respectfully with others in a multicultural environment. We use a proactive approach to reduce prejudice and promote inclusiveness. The teaching staff guides children to think critically about unfairness and stand up for themselves and others in the face of bias. We value diversity and challenge bias, rather than ignoring and therefore reinforcing children's misunderstandings of differences. Appreciation of the program's diverse community is reflected in the curriculum; classroom environments where children can find pictures of people who look like them in the pictures on the walls, book, toys, etc; in hiring practices and staff professional development; and program goals. We share a commitment to human rights,

dignity of the individual and social justice. We strongly encourage families to share their ideas, talents, stories, and culture.

### **Conferences:**

Infant – Pre-Kindergarten parent-teacher conferences are offered every fall and spring and on an as needed basis as requested by either the family or the staff. Conferences are an ideal time for the staff to share information about your child, for the families to share information from home and for staff and families to reflect together on needs and goals for their children.

### **Communication:**

At Serendipity Children’s Center we believe that you are your child’s first teacher! Open communication between families, staff, and children is an important value in our program. It is the parent/guardian’s responsibility to read and to respond, if applicable, to all written communications from Serendipity Children’s Center including emails, posted information on bulletin boards, newsletters, two way communication logs, and personal communications with individual family. Other forms of communication include photos, children’s projects and curriculum plans which give an overview of current themes and activities. There are many avenues for communication between families and staff. We encourage families to communicate directly with teachers. We ask and encourage parents to let us know if a translator is necessary to ensure information is appropriately communicated. If a family has a concern and feels that the concern has not been adequately addressed by classroom staff, they are encouraged to speak with the Center’s Management Team. Families should notify Serendipity Children’s Center, Inc. in writing, of any important changes or information regarding their child’s health, attendance, schedule, etc. There are systems in place in each classroom for families to leave written messages for teachers. All of management is available via email as well.

The Brightwheel App is another way parents can communicate with their child’s teacher.

### **Communicable Diseases:**

Serendipity Children’s Center follows all health/communicable disease policies as outlined in the center’s Health Policy. A copy of this policy is on file with the Center Director, on licensing boards and is available upon request for review.

Parents are required to pick up an ill child within 45 minutes of notification by phone. If a parent is reached, but cannot pick their child up within 45 minutes, it becomes the parent’s responsibility to arrange for alternate pick up with someone listed on the child’s emergency contact form. The staff will not continue to call those listed on the emergency contact list once a parent is reached. If a parent cannot be reached, the staff will begin to call the people listed on the emergency contact form, until arrangements can be made for the child to be picked up.

Until you are able to pick up your child, your child will be made comfortable in a location where she or he is supervised by a familiar caregiver. If your child is suspected of having a contagious disease, then until she or he can be picked up by the family, your child will be placed where new individuals will not be exposed. Your child’s teacher will immediately notify you or other persons authorized by you.

Children will be excluded from participation in the program if they exhibit symptoms of any communicable disease. They will not be permitted to return to the program until they are no longer contagious. Guidelines for determining the contagious period for a specific illness are based on the recommendations by the American Academy of Pediatrics. Children must present a doctor’s note stating they are no longer contagious and can return to the program. Serendipity Children’s Center reserves the right to refuse to allow a child to return if the Center Director or designee believes the child to be too ill to participate in the program.

According to WAC 170-295-3030 minimum licensing requirements for childcare centers is the following:

Please keep your child home if...

- They are vomiting or have had diarrhea 2 or more times within a 24 hour period. They may not return to the center for 24 hours after vomiting or the last watery stool.
- They have a temperature of 100.7 degrees with any other symptoms, including fatigue they may not return to the center for 24 hours.
- They have lice or nits. They may not return until they are completely removed.
- They have an eye infection, thick mucus or pus drainage from the eye, or pink eye. Child may not return to the center without a doctor's note.
- Child has a sore throat and cough, especially with a fever or swollen glands in the neck. The child may not return to the center if they have any of these symptoms. If the child has Strep Throat he/she may not return until being on antibiotics for 24 hours.
- They are not feeling well or not themselves. If your child is too sick to participate in the days activities, including outside time or if your child is unusually tired, pale, has a lack of appetite, is confused, or cranky they should not be at the center.
- If your child has been put on an antibiotic for something contagious, please keep them out of the facility for at least 24 hour unless otherwise directed by a doctor.

The staff of Serendipity Children's Center, Inc. uses these guidelines when making decisions about sending your child home or not accepting them to the school that day.

If your child will be absent due to illness, we request that you notify the Center Director. This enables Serendipity to keep track of any illnesses, which may occur at our school. This information will only be shared with faculty on a "need to know" basis. If your child has a communicable disease, we ask that you share the diagnosis with the Center Director, so that the parents of the other children in the school may be notified that a communicable disease is present. Once again, only the communicable disease information will be shared. Serendipity Children's Center will take all measures necessary to protect your child's confidentiality. You are not required to disclose this information by law, and your continued enrollment will not be based whatsoever on your decision to share, (or not) the reason for your child's absence from school.

#### **Confidentiality:**

Within Serendipity Children's Center, Inc. confidential and sensitive information will only be shared with employees of Serendipity Children's Center who have a "need to know" in order to most appropriately and safely care for your child. Confidential and sensitive information about faculty, other parents and/or children will not be shared with parents, as Serendipity Children's Center strives to protect everyone's right of privacy. Confidential information includes, but is not limited to: names, addresses, phone numbers, disability information, and HIV/AIDS status or other health related information of anyone associated with Serendipity Children's Center, Inc.

Outside of Serendipity Children's Center, confidential and sensitive information about a child will only be shared when the parent of the child has given express written consent, except where otherwise provided for by law. Parents will be provided with a document detailing the information that is to be shared outside of Serendipity Children's Center, persons with whom the information will be shared, and the reason(s) for sharing the information.

Any parent who violates the Confidentiality policy will not be permitted on agency property thereafter. Refer to the policy regarding Parents Right to Immediate Access for additional information regarding dis-enrollment of a child when a parent is prohibited from accessing agency property.

You may observe children at our center who are disabled or who exhibit behavior that may appear inappropriate (i.e. biting, hitting, and spitting). You may be curious or concerned about the other child. Our Confidentiality Policy protects every child's privacy. Employees of Serendipity Children's Center are strictly prohibited from discussing anything about another child with you.

Serendipity Children's Center takes very seriously the responsibility of maintaining the confidentiality of all persons associated with the agency. Parents must understand the implications of this responsibility. Parents need to recognize that the Confidentiality Policy not only applies to their child or family, but all children, families and employees associated with Serendipity Children's Center. Any parent who shares any information considered to be confidential, pressures employees or other parents for information which is not necessary for them to know, will be considered to be in violation of the Confidentiality Policy.

### **Cleaning (Excerpt from Health Policy):**

Washing, rinsing, and sanitizing/disinfecting are required on most surfaces in child care facilities. This includes tables, counters, toys, diaper changing areas, etc. This 3-step method helps maintain a more sanitary child care environment and healthier children and staff.

1. Washing removes a large portion of germs, along with organic materials - food, saliva, dirt, etc. – which decrease the effectiveness of sanitizers/disinfectants.
2. Rinsing further removes the above, along with any excess detergent/soap.
3. Sanitizing/disinfecting kills the vast majority of remaining germs.

### **Clothing:**

Please provide an extra set of clothes for your children. Please DO NOT send your child in new/special clothing with expectations of them coming home clean. We purchase washable markers and paint and the children use smocks, however it can still get on their clothes. If the paint or marker does not wash out, please tell the teachers so we can avoid ordering that brand again. We cannot refund lost items or replace damaged clothing or shoes.



### **Diapers:**

Children in diapers are routinely checked after breakfast, lunch, snack, naps, before and after outside play, prior to departure, in addition to whenever needed. Diapering records are kept on child, time, and staff who changes them. The infant and toddler diaper changes are also recorded in the Brightwheel App. The required amount of diapers per day must be supplied. If a child does NOT have diapers, after the adult has been continuously reminded, the teacher will deny care until diapers are supplied. One pack of diaper wipes must be brought by the 5th of every month for children in diapering stage. If parents continually neglect this requirement a charge of \$10 dollars per month will be added to their account until wipes are brought.

### **Disaster Plans:**

With the implementation of our Disaster Plan you can rest assured we will do everything we can to ensure your child's safety in the event of a crisis or disaster.

With any disaster or crisis, your cooperation is necessary for the following:

- Provide required Disaster Kit supplies upon enrollment.
- Encourage and explain to your child why the best place for them is at the center.
- Explain that if you are unable to pick them up quickly, the child care staff will care for them until you or your emergency contact comes to get them.
- Please do not telephone the child care center. Telephone lines will be needed for emergency communications for the first 4 hours.

- Listen to local or regional radio station for updates.
- In case of a bomb threat on campus, children will be evacuated to an Alternate Safe Location. If the entire campus is unsafe, parents will be contacted by phone.
- The child care staff will care for your child until you or your designated contact is able to reach them. Be sure to keep your child's Emergency Contact Information up to date.
- Children will only be released to those specified by you on the Emergency Form.
- We will also utilize the phone numbers on the emergency release form should we need to re-locate to our alternate site.

Please see Serendipity Children's Center, Inc. Disaster Policy. A copy can be found in every classroom, and may be checked out from the office.

#### **Dated Information:**

Parents wishing to obtain copies of dated information including but not limited to sign in/out sheets, immunizations, etc. will need to pay the following fees in advance to receive the information.

- o 3 months to 6 months back: \$10.00 per every 3 copies
- o 6 months to 9 months back: \$20.00 per every 3 copies
- o 9 months to 12 months back: \$30.00 per every 3 copies
- o Anything past a year: \$40.00 per every 3 copies

The parent asking for the information will be required to pay these fees.

#### **Dismissal:**

Serendipity Children's Center, Inc. reserves the right to dismiss any child at any time, with or without cause.

Parents will be refunded any unused tuition within 30 business days of dismissal. A check will be mailed to the address indicated in the child's file. Any past due balances must be paid within 30 days of the dismissal. An invoice detailing the past due balance will be forwarded to the address indicated in the child's file within one week of the dismissal. Any balances remaining after the 30 day period will be referred to the agency's legal counsel for collection.

The Center Director or designee will assist the parent in gathering their child's belongings at the time of dismissal and parents are required to leave agency property in a calm and respectful manner, immediately. Serendipity Children's Center, Inc. will request assistance from local police should any parent become disruptive and/or uncooperative while gathering their child's belongings upon dismissal.

A dismissed child and his/her parents are required to call and request an appointment with the Center Director if they wish to return to the property following a dismissal. Appointments are made at the discretion of the Center Director and are not a right of the dismissed child or parent. However, if a dismissed child and his/her parents requests an appointment, all attempts will be made to accommodate the request in a timely matter.

Following a dismissal, any parent or child who harasses, threatens or in any manner causes harm to anyone affiliated with the agency by calling, writing, or any other means, will be prosecuted to the fullest extent of the law, by Serendipity Children's Center, Inc.

#### **Daily Schedule:**

Each classroom has their own schedule that they will follow. This schedule should be posted on the classroom parent information board. Parents will be notified to major changes to the daily schedule in their child's classroom.

### **Discipline Philosophy:**

Our discipline philosophy revolves around problem solving. By using problem solving, we teach children how to resolve conflicts, learn self-discipline, and show respect to others and develop positive relationships.

Our staff facilitates problem solving through the following steps:

- Understanding the child as a whole and recognizing what outside factors, cultural differences, and circumstances influenced the behavior.
- Using active listening in order to help interpret and reflect the child's feelings in order to help the child to find a solution.
- Talking, discussing and negotiating to encourage resolving the conflict nonviolently.
- Working toward teaching the child to stay within safe boundaries and learn self-control. Limits are based on safety, responsibility and respect.

At Serendipity Children's Center, Inc. we provide a nurturing atmosphere while encouraging children to make appropriate behavior choices. We know that young children thrive in an environment that is safe, stimulating, nurturing, predictable, and fun. We believe effective discipline is done with consistency, and in order for a child to prosper they need lots of love, attention, and affection.

Our goal is to always use positive energy whenever possible, such as pointing out even the smallest accomplishments. We aim to bring up children with a strong self-esteem, substantial character, a healthy self-respect, as well as respect for others, and hopefully a good sense of humor.

The following policy pertains to those times a child goes to the office because the teacher has reached that step in their discipline plan or the child's behavior is severe, either in the classroom or on the playground.

- 1<sup>st</sup> and 2<sup>nd</sup> time to the office: Note home or phone call
- 3<sup>rd</sup> time: Parent/Student/Teacher/Management Conference
- 4<sup>th</sup> time: One day suspension with a discussion of behavior expectations prior to the return of school.

Flexibility is key when considering behavior concerns. Serendipity Children's Center understands that all situations are unique and will take into consideration all information before enforcing any type of behavior modification plan.

### **Dress Code:**

Children are engaged in various activities during the course of the day, many of which may be messy, and/or athletic in nature. Children are engaged in outdoor play daily, weather permitting. Children are required to be dressed in season appropriate, comfortable, clothing and sturdy play shoes with nonskid soles.

Coats, hats, gloves, scarves and winter boots must be provided in colder weather. It is not necessary for the children to wear their winter boots to school. Staff will change the children into their winter boots if necessary when they go outdoors.

Children under 5 are required to have at least one seasonably and size appropriate complete change of clothing at the center at all times, more if they are not completely toilet trained. This includes shirt, pants, underwear, socks, and shoes. All clothing items must be clearly labeled with the child's first and last name. Serendipity Children's Center is not responsible for lost or damaged items of clothing.

Children are strongly discouraged from wearing jewelry of any kind with the exception of medic ID bracelets. Jewelry can be a safety hazard as children engage in active play. Serendipity Children's Center will not be responsible for lost or stolen jewelry.

### **Drop-In Care:**

Drop In Care is offered for families who need additional care outside of their regularly scheduled hours or days.

Families that use drop-in care are required to call in on the day that they need care or ahead of time. This is to determine if care is available.

If classroom space is available and the times work for the center, then the child may come. If the space and time are not available then the staff may suggest a different time slot, or the child may not come. Extra staffing may not be available for drop-in care. It will be necessary that you first receive permission from the Center Director, so that appropriate staffing can be planned for.

Drop-In Care is available at a daily rate and once approved will be billed to your account for payment the following billing cycle.

### **Developmental Screening:**

All aspects of a family's culture, values, language, experiences, abilities and disabilities are considered in the developmental screenings of a child. Teachers and management collaborate in the communication and referral process to families. Staff support families to make the decision to obtain services for their children and encourage them to advocate for their child's needed services. The following process occurs:

1. Teachers observe and document a child showing concerns up to the first 45 days of enrollment.
2. The Center Director and teacher conference with the family regarding documented concerns and offer available resources for a medical referral.
3. Results of the developmental screenings are kept in the child's file located in a locked file cabinet in the office. Authorized family members have access at any time.
4. Families may take copies of the developmental screening to a referral or sign a release of information for the center to send by mail or email.

### **Documenting Children's Progress:**

Staff are in regular communication with families about their child's pursuits, interests and struggles. Staff informally share information with families on a weekly, if not daily, basis. This information may be shared verbally or through learning observations on the Brighwheel App. Staff are available during times when they are not responsible for children to talk with families about their child's development. In addition to this, children's learning and progress is documented through assessments and documentation in individual child portfolios.



### **Emergency Procedures:**

If your child has a seizure or other serious injury, 911 will be called and then the immediate parent/guardian will be contacted. If the individual is unreachable, people on the authorized pick-up list will be called next. The Center Director/Lead teacher and the medical consent form will go to the hospital with your child if a contact person cannot be reached before the ambulance departs.

### **Emergency Drills:**

Serendipity Children's Center, Inc. conducts monthly fire and emergency/evacuation drills. Parents, staff and children will not be made aware of drill dates or times, as this is the most effective way to assess the effectiveness of fire and emergency/evacuation plans.

During a fire/emergency drill or real fire/emergency situation, parents may not sign children into or out of the program. Parents must wait until the drill is complete and children have returned to the building to sign their child into the program. Parents may feel free to wait with the child's class in the designated safe-zone outside of the building until the drill is complete.

In the event of a real fire/emergency situation, the Center Director or designee will inform each classroom teacher that the center will be closing. At this time any parents waiting to sign their child in will have to leave the premises with their child. All other parents or emergency contact persons will be notified by telephone of the situation. As with the sick child pick up policy, children must be picked up within 45 minutes of the telephone call.

Parents wishing to sign their child out of the program during a fire/emergency drill or real fire/emergency situation are expected to have patience with the staff as they are trying to maintain order during a often hectic and dangerous situation. If the center is in the midst of a fire/emergency drill, parents will be required to wait until the drill is completed and the staff and children are returned to the building to sign their child out of the program. If the center is having a real fire/emergency situation, parents will be asked to wait until the Center Director or designee has accounted for all staff and children and gives the staff permission to release children. Once again, it is important for parents and staff to work together, remain calm, and cooperate with the fire/emergency personnel and center administration during these important and critical situations.

### **Environmental Hazards:**

Washington State does not have smog or severe air pollution however Serendipity Children's Center, Inc. will follow Disaster/Emergency procedures if closures were to occur.

- Sign in stations will be used to notify parents of any weather concerns such as a high pollen count or forecasted disasters such as flooding and earthquakes.
- The landscaping staff has specific pesticides that can be used in the evening after the center closes or on the weekend. A notice will be posted for parents and staff if this occurred during the business week.

### **Enrollment:**

Enrollment at Serendipity Children's Center. is open to children from 6 weeks – 5 years. Enrollment shall be granted without regard to a child's race, color, creed, religion, national origin, gender, or disability; and without regard to a parent or guardian's race, color, creed, religion, age, national origin, gender, pregnancy or disability

Parents can apply for enrollment of their child in Serendipity Children's Center, Inc. by completing the Enrollment Application and paying an annual \$150.00 per child registration fee. The registration fee is non-refundable. Enrollment is limited to available spaces only.

A submitted Enrollment Application is not meant to serve as contracts guaranteeing service for any duration.

Continued enrollment at Serendipity Children's Center is contingent upon the family's adherence to the policies and procedures of Serendipity Children's Center as outlined in this handbook including, but not limited to, timely payment of all fees and tuition.

### **Emergency Closures or Delays:**

There may be situations that require Serendipity Children's Center to delay opening, close early or close for the entire day. These decisions are made by the management team.

### ***Severe Weather Conditions***

In the event of severe weather conditions, Serendipity Children's Center will consider multiple factors in determining whether or not to close the center. Serendipity will consider the decisions of Olympia, Tumwater and North Thurston school districts, availability of staff and the safe access of our buildings when deciding whether to adjust operating hours because of weather. Families can get current information on operating hours by checking their email, Brightwheel messages, Serendipity Facebook or calling 360-786-0197 to listen to an updated voicemail message.

Potential schedule changes include:

- Delayed Opening: Center will open at 9 or 10 am.
- If the center is open during severe weather we may not have all classrooms operating due to limited staff availability.
- During extreme weather conditions, weather will be monitored and if needed for the safety of our families and employees, the center may close earlier than 6:30 pm. If there is a need to close the center early, families will be notified 2 hours prior to the center closing (if possible). Should the center staff be unable to reach the parents, the persons listed on the emergency contact form will be called until pick up arrangements can be made.
- Unable to Open: Center will be closed for entire day due to weather conditions.

### ***Other Emergencies***

Other situations, including but not limited to, electrical power failure, lack of water, lack of heat or air conditioning, hazardous road conditions or other situations which may endanger the safety or health of children and employees, may result in Serendipity Children's Center, Inc. facilities being closed at the discretion of the Center Director or Owner. Should the center need to close in the middle of the day, the center staff will attempt to reach the child's parents first to arrange for pick up. Should the center staff be unable to reach the parents, the persons listed on the emergency contact form will be called until pick up arrangements can be made.

### ***River Flooding***

The Deschutes River floods from time to time during the winter and spring. In rare occurrences, this flooding can cover Tumwater Valley Drive and prevent us from operating The Playhouse and Main Center due to road closures. Flooding potential is monitored closely and parents are kept in close communication. If Tumwater Valley Drive floods while we are open, there is emergency access available by a back gate for parents to pick up their children after we close. Per the city of Tumwater, we are unable to operate these two buildings with the closure of the road, because there isn't access for emergency vehicles in the case of an emergency.

### ***Alternate Safe Location***

Serendipity Children's Center has designated Serendipity Academy, as its alternate safe location. This location will be used to house the employees and children in cases where the physical site is uninhabitable. Such scenarios include but are not limited to: fire, flood, toxic spill, and/or fumes. The Center Director will make the determination to evacuate the center and proceed to the alternate safe location and will advise the employees as such. Parents or emergency contact persons should report directly to the alternate location if one is indicated.

Should the center need to close, delay, or close early for any reason, including: inclement weather, other emergencies, or acts of God, tuition will not be refunded or reduced for closures.

Closure updates are available via email, Facebook, Brightwheel and by calling 360-786-0197 and listening to the voicemail.



### **Field Trips:**

Serendipity Children's Center, Inc. does supplement some of the class curriculum with both on site and off premise field trips. Parents are required to give written permission for their child to attend each field trip. Notification of a field trip will be sent home in advance of the trip, with all pertinent trip information including, destination, date, time, reason for trip, cost, and mode of transportation. Accompanying the notification paper, teachers will include a permission slip to be filled out, signed, and returned to the teacher prior to the date of the trip. The field trip permission slip must be filled out completely and accurately, and all trip costs must be paid in advance in order for your child to attend.

***If you choose not to have your child attend the field trip, you may need to find alternate care for your child on that day due to the fact that your child's class will not be at the center.***

If parents wish to attend the trip with their child, they should discuss attending with the classroom teacher. Serendipity Children's Center, Inc. provides all required supervision for all field trips, but always invites and welcomes parents to attend.

If your child is not scheduled to attend on the day of a field trip and you wish for your child to participate in the trip, please discuss this with your child's teacher at least three days prior to the date of the trip. Your child will be permitted to attend if required ratios can be maintained with his/her addition to the class. You will be required to purchase Drop-In care time to cover the costs for the day of care, as well as the cost of the trip and signed permission slip will be due prior to the date of the trip.

Teachers will take a cell phone, medical information on each child, and a first aid kit on all trips.

### **Food:**

For the safety of your child, parents are required to provide notification, in the form of a doctor's note, of any allergies (food or otherwise), with instruction for treatment should a child have an allergic reaction. Please refer to the Health and Safety Policies contained herein for further information.

Serendipity Children's Center, Inc. never uses food as a punishment. Children will never be denied participation in any mealtime for behavioral reasons.

Food can be used by teachers as a reward for good behavior and/or for classroom lessons. Any food given as a reward (i.e. lollipops, candy) will be placed in the child's cubby/school bag to be enjoyed at home.

### **Food from Home:**

We discourage all outside food and drinks being brought into the center. However, any bottles or cups may be labeled with the child's name and date and kept in the classroom fridge to have at the time of pickup. (See Birthday Celebrations for other food restrictions.) All food brought from must be tree nut and peanut free.

***Infant Classroom:***

Children enrolled in the infant classrooms must have all food items for consumption prepared and labeled each day the child is in attendance. This includes formula/breast milk bottles, baby food, snacks, and juice bottles. Be sure to prepare one more bottle than you think your child will consume in a day to assure that your child won't run out. Prepared bottles must be stored in the designated refrigerator and will be warmed in a water bath prior to feeding. No bottles will be warmed in the microwave.

Parents are required to complete a feeding schedule for their child on a weekly basis, or as the child's feeding requirements change. Staff will complete a daily log for each child detailing for the parent what the child ate, when, and how much in the Brightwheel App.

We support breastfeeding and will coordinate a schedule based on the needs of you and your infant. Breastfeeding mothers are welcome to come to the center during the day to feed their child. Appropriate feeding locations will be made available. Please discuss your desire to come to the center to breastfeed your child with the classroom teacher. Or in sending breast milk to the center, please see your child's teacher about the requirements for storing and serving breast milk during the day.

**Fines:**

While a child attends Serendipity Children's Center, Inc., he or she will be using items that belong to the center. If a child intentionally damages or destroys these items, the parent will incur a monetary fine representing a fair repair cost or replacement cost.

**Firearms and Weapons:**

At no time is any person permitted to carry any type of firearm, ammunitions and/or weapon on agency property for any reason. The only exception to this policy will be given to on duty police officers. Violation of this policy will result in immediate dismissal from the program.



**Hand Washing:**

Please allow enough time in the morning for your child to wash their hands. This is good role modeling as well as a licensing requirement. All persons are required to wash hands upon entering any classroom, before & after eating, after bathroom use, before & after diaper changing, and after coming in contact with bodily fluids.

**Health Records: (Please see Physical Exams/Health Records)**

**Health and Safety:**

Please see Serendipity Children's Center, Inc. Health Care Policy. A copy can be found in every classroom, and may be checked out from the office.

**Hours / Days of Operation:**

Serendipity Children's Center is open Monday – Friday 6:00 am – 6:30 pm.

**Illness:**

See Communicable Diseases.

**Identification Checks:**

Identification checks will be performed at any time that a child is released to any unfamiliar or unannounced individual. The purpose of this is to ensure safety of you and your children. We prefer that a written note be left with your child's teacher; however, if this is not possible, a verbal message may be left as well. If no note is available from either the parent or the teachers from the parent, then the child's guardian will be called to get approval for the pickup.

**Immunizations:**

To protect all children in our care and our staff, and to meet state health requirements, we accept only children fully immunized for their age. We keep on file the Certificate of Immunization status (CIS) form to show the Department of Health that we are in compliance with licensing standards.

Children are required to be immunized for the following:

- DTAP (Diphtheria, Tetanus, Pertussis)
- IPV (Polio)
- Hepatitis B
- HIB (Hemophilus Influenza Type B)
- Varicella (Chicken Pox, or written proof from the doctor that the child had the Chicken Pox)
- Pneumococcal Conjugate (for specific ages after July 2009)

Immunization list may change as the Department of Health changes or adds immunization requirements.

Children may attend childcare without an immunization(s) if:

- The parent signs the back of the WA State Department of Health form stating that they have religious or philosophical reasons for not obtaining the immunization(s)
- A health care provider signs that the child is medically exempt.

Children who are not immunized may not be accepted for care during an outbreak of a vaccine preventable disease. This is for the protection of the unimmunized child and to reduce the spread of the disease. This determination will be made by the Public Health's Communicable Disease and Epidemiology division.

*Current immunization information and schedules are available at: [www.doh.wa.gov/cfh/immunize/schools/](http://www.doh.wa.gov/cfh/immunize/schools/)*

**Incident Reports:**

Should your child be involved in an incident/accident during the course of the school day, a staff member will complete an Incident/Accident Report. The Incident/Accident Report will be given to you by a teacher when you pick up your child.

The classroom teacher will be able to briefly discuss the matter with you at pick-up. However, should you feel it necessary to have an in depth discussion or meeting, it is most appropriate to schedule the meeting for a later date because the teacher is responsible for supervising the remaining children in the classroom. A telephone conference may be scheduled for later in the day or for the next day at nap/rest time if the parent(s) is unable to meet at the center during the course of the day.

**Insurance:**

It is the parent's responsibility to provide medical and or dental coverage for their children in case of an emergency. We require your insurance information in order to give any information needed to the hospital or doctor's office in the event of an emergency if you have not made it there yet.

**Items From Home:**

Due to the risk of damage, sharing issues, and loss, children are not permitted to bring in toys from home, unless specifically requested by the classroom teacher for use as part of the curriculum. Parents are responsible for enforcing this policy with their child. Parents are encouraged to consult the classroom teacher should they find their child is having difficulty with this policy. Children in classrooms with nap/rest time are permitted to bring one plush/non-musical toy with which to nap/rest. This toy is to be placed in the child's cubby to be used at nap/rest time only. All toys brought in for use as part of the curriculum, and/or for nap/rest time will be inspected for safety and appropriateness, and may be prohibited at the discretion of Serendipity Children's Center, Inc. staff. All items must be clearly marked with the child's first and last name. Serendipity Children's Center Inc. will not be responsible for replacement of and/or finding lost items that have been brought to the center with or without permission from a staff member.

**Impaired Persons:**

The staff of Serendipity Children's Center, Inc. will contact local police and/or the other custodial parent should a parent appear to the staff of Serendipity Children's Center, Inc. to be under the influence of drugs and/or alcohol. The parent's right to immediate access does not permit the agency from denying a custodial parent access to their child even if the parent is or appears to be impaired. However, Serendipity Children's Center, Inc. staff will delay the impaired parent as long as possible, while contacting the other parent, the local police, and Child Protective Services.

Any other authorized person who attempts to pick-up a child, and appears to the staff of Serendipity Children's Center, Inc. to be under the influence of drugs and/or alcohol will be denied access to the child. The staff of Serendipity Children's Center, Inc. will contact the child's parents, local police and Child Protective Services to notify them of the situation.

**IPC (Individualized Plan of Care):**

At any given time throughout your child's enrollment with Serendipity Children's Center, Inc., he/she may be put on an IPC. An IPC can cover all areas of development. Physical, mental, emotional, and cognitive needs are always assessed when deciding if a child should be placed on an IPC. If the teachers think that an IPC may be necessary, they will set up a conference with the family to discuss their thoughts. Outside assistance may also be brought in depending on the nature of the assessment. During the conference, the family will be asked to sign a form with the written plan of action. This form will be completed in support of you and your child and will include any accommodations your child may need, in regards to medications, sleeping, eating, toileting, needing to be in a wheelchair, or any other accommodations. Depending on the accommodations, a doctor's input may be relevant in completing the IPC. If your child's needs change while in care, an ICP may need to be revised or updated. Please see the Center Director with questions or concerns.





### **Licensing Information:**

Serendipity Children's Center, Inc. is licensed by the State of Washington, and the state inspector is assigned to us by the state. We are licensed for ages 6 weeks to 6 years, with the ability to care for 115 children at Serendipity Main, 50 at Serendipity Playhouse and 90 at Serendipity Academy.

### **Late Tuition Payments:**

There is no credit given for vacations, scheduled school holidays, child illness, or for closings due to emergency situations, inclement weather, or acts of God.

All payments are due on the 5<sup>th</sup> of every month. If the 5<sup>th</sup> falls on a weekend or holiday, the payment is due the following Monday.

Non-payment of tuition is grounds for immediate dismissal from the program. However, we do offer a grace period until the 15<sup>th</sup> of the month after which a late payment charge of \$35.00 will be charged to the account. We will terminate care after the first week of non-payment into a new month of care. Timely payments are essential for continued enrollment at Serendipity Children's Center, Inc., however, if you anticipate difficulty with paying on time, please discuss the matter with the Center Director immediately. If alternative arrangements for payment are approved you will be notified by the Center Director.

### **Late Pick Up:**

Late fees will be applied to anyone arriving after 6:30 pm, unless arrangements have been made with management. If extended care arrangements haven't been made, families arriving 6:30 pm will be charged additional late fees. The charges for late pick up are as follows: \$2.00 per minute per child with a phone call to the center, if no call is placed to the center the charge will be \$4.00 per minute per child. All late fees are payable at the time of pick up.

All measurements of time are to be according to the Serendipity Children's Center, Inc. clock located in the main room.

A child's services can be terminated should the child be picked-up late on 8 (eight) occasions in one school year regardless of the reasons for the late pick-up. It is the parent's responsibility to ensure that someone (either a parent or Emergency/Alternate pick-up person) is available to pick up the child on time.

Child protective services will be called at 7:00 pm if a parent has not called and emergency contacts cannot be reached.

### **Late Drop Off:**

Teachers design specific curriculums based on the time that your children spend with us. Due to this fact, the preferred drop off time is no later than 9:00 am. If your child has an appointment but will be in later in the morning, please call/email and let the center know.

### **Legal Separation and Divorce:**

Legal Separation and Divorce often require paperwork for the child's file with regard to parenting plans, etc. Serendipity Children's Center Inc. will follow the legal paperwork that is provided and will not take issue with either parent. Serendipity staff and management will not provide statements unless subpoenaed to do so. All information requested by an attorney's must be requested in writing, with no less than a one week period of time to obtain paperwork requested. Paperwork for the current year will be available. If each

parent requires separate newsletters and correspondence, please let the Center Director know where to send the information.

**Lost & Found:** Please label everything that can be marked with your child's name. We cannot be held responsible for lost items. At the end of each day, all unclaimed articles/items are placed in a lost and found box. At the end of each month, due to lack of storage space, unclaimed articles will be given to charity.



### **Meals / Meal Times:**

Menus are on a 4 week rotation cycle, which are posted in each classroom and copies are available upon request. Teachers and children engage in family style meals at snacks and lunch. This includes role modeling appropriate conversation, serving and passing of food, pouring milk, clearing dishes and scraping leftover food into appropriate containers. Parents may sit and visit at meal time, however the food is measured out for the children and the two teachers, so will not be available for parent visitors. Meals are served according to each classroom schedule and can only be available at the designated times. Please talk with the Center Director or Lead Teacher if you have questions. Any food substitutions require a doctor's note, which is placed in the child's file, on the classroom allergy list, and in the kitchen. All substitutions will be of equal nutrient value. We will provide proper nutrition that is critical for optimal growth and development. Our center provides the following snacks/meals; time of service depends on classroom:

- Breakfast      8:30 AM – 9:00 AM
- Lunch            11:00 AM – 12:30 PM
- PM Snack       3:00 PM – 4:00 PM

### **Medication:**

Serendipity Children's Center, Inc. will only dispense over-the-counter and/or prescription medication that is in original, labeled containers. Serendipity Children's Center, Inc. will only give medication to the child for whom the doctor's note is written and/or for whom the medication container is labeled. If a prescription is to be given, the date on the bottle must be current, indicating this is a new prescription or have a doctor's note indicating it is acceptable to use a previous prescription. Any over the counter medications must have recommendations for the child's age on the label. If it doesn't, for example Infant Tylenol requests you to consult a doctor for dosage under age 2, you will be required to get a note from a physician indicating the proper dosage amount and schedule for your child.

Parents are required to complete a Medication Form each time that medication is to be dispensed. Medication Forms can be found in each classroom. Medication Forms, doctor's notes, and medication are to be turned into the lead staff member in your child's classroom.

Serendipity Children's Center, Inc. will not dispense over-the-counter, fever reducing/pain medication (ex. Children's Tylenol, Children's Motrin) on an as needed basis. A doctor's note detailing the recommended reasons for administration and appropriate dosage might be required.

Parents are responsible for ensuring that all prescription medication is properly labeled by a pharmacist and replaced prior to the expiration date. Parents are also required to pick up all unused medicine from Serendipity Children's Center Inc. or the medicine will be properly disposed of by the staff.

Serendipity Children's Center, Inc. will only dispense medicine during the middle of the day (at lunch). Medication that needs to be dispensed in the morning or evening should be administered by the parents at

home. The only exception to this would be medicine that is needed more frequently than a 3 times a day schedule.

Rescue meds are taken on the playground/field trip and kept in a pack with gloves for immediate administering.

Medication is stored:

- Inaccessible to children
- Separate from staff medication
- Protected from sources of contamination
- Away from heat, light, and sources of moisture
- At temperature specified on the label (i.e., at room temperature or refrigerated)
- So that internal (oral) and external (topical) medications are separated
- Separate from food
- In a sanitary and orderly manner

Unused medications or medication that is no longer needed will be discarded or sent home with parent. Medication not picked up by parents should be given to the Center Director .

Controlled substances (e.g., ADHD medication) are stored in a locked medicine box in the director's office.

Procedure for administering feeding tubes must be filled out on an Individual Care of Plan accompanied with a doctor's note before enrollment.



### **Non-Discrimination:**

Serendipity Children's Center, Inc. does not discriminate on the basis of gender, race, creed, physical and mental appearances, handicaps, or religion. We are committed to reaching out to people of different races, genders, ethnicity, and ability, and we strive to create an environment of inclusion that celebrates our differences and highlights our commonalities. Our program accepts children with special needs as long as a safe, supportive environment can be provided for the child consistent with the requirements of the Americans with Disabilities Act. Serendipity Children's Center, Inc. strives to be welcoming and inclusive to diverse staff, children, and families.

### **Nap Time:**

#### ***Infants***

We provide a crib, mattress, sheet and a sleep sack. Parents can choose to provide a sleep sack from home. For the prevention of SIDS, infants must be put on their back for each nap. When they are physically able they may roll over by themselves to sleep on their stomach. Teachers are not permitted to elevate or put other items (such as stuffed animal, quilts, boppy pillow) in a crib without a specific note from a doctor. Infants faces and heads will remain uncovered at all times.

#### ***Toddlers***

Teachers play quiet music during rest time and rub backs. Some children will be held and rocked to sleep until they can transition to a cot. The teachers will individualize care based on the needs of the children and information received by parents. Families are responsible for purchasing the center required nap mats. The nap mats cost \$25.00, and mats are yours to keep at any time you disenroll with the program.

### **Preschool**

Children have a scheduled rest time and are expected to rest quietly, but not forced to sleep. Teachers play quiet music during rest time and rub backs. We acknowledge that all children fall asleep differently. If your child has any preferences please communicate this with the teacher. Families are responsible for purchasing the center required nap mats. The nap mats cost \$25.00, and mats are yours to keep at any time you disenroll with the program.

**All bedding will need to be taken home by the families on Friday or the last day of the week that your child is in care; and returned the first day of the week that your child returns to the center. Serendipity Children’s Center, Inc. will not wash any bedding.**



### **Outside Play:**

Colds are NOT the result of going outside in bad weather and getting a chill. *FACT– Colds are caused by viruses which are spread through the air when someone with a cold coughs or sneezes, or by direct contact when someone with a cold touches their respiratory secretions and spreads them to others by touching or sharing objects.* “Promoting Healthy Child Care, Health Department.”

All children (except infants) will be outside every day. We can not keep children inside during this time unless there is a doctor’s note excusing the child from outdoor play. If children aren’t well enough to play outside then they should stay home from school and rest. Please bring appropriate clothing for your child: summer clothes (and at the time of enrollment you should have filled out a sunscreen permission form, if not please see your child’s teacher), or winter clothes and boots. We encourage children to experience sand, dirt and gravel when playing outdoors. Please bring a hat/scarf for your child to wear over their hair if you are concerned it may get damaged by sand/dirt. Please bring rubber boots for your child when it is raining outside. We do not prevent children from playing in puddles; however we try to redirect them away when possible.

### **Open Door Policy:**

Enrolled parents may come to the center between the hours of 6:00am and 6:30pm, Monday - Friday. We encourage talking to the classroom lead teacher about the best times to visit for participation in activities and mealtime. Often times, parent lunch breaks do not coincide with the children’s, and it may be naptime.

Any individual on the pick-up/authorization form may visit during our hours of operation with proof of picture ID. Guests from out-of-town must show picture ID and must be documented in writing by the enrolling parent of their arrival time. Questions should be directed to the Center Director.



### **Parking:**

As a reminder, please do not park in the handicapped or no parking spots. Parents may not leave a child in a vehicle without an adult. Parents may not leave a running vehicle anywhere on the premises. Parents who continuously violate our parking regulations may be subject to dismissal from program.

### **Peanut Free:**

Serendipity Children’s Center has chosen to offer a peanut and tree-nut free environment due to increasing allergies. Although we cannot prevent an allergic reaction, offering this environment does ease the fears that come with peanut allergies. We appreciate your help when packing lunches. There are many healthy alternatives to peanut butter. If your child suffers from any kind of allergy, such as milk, wheat, etc., it is

very important that you let our staff know, so that we can help in any way we can to make your child's stay with us comfortable.

#### **Personal Items:**

Every effort is made to ensure that your child takes home everything they brought to school. However things do go missing. Please label all your child's belongings. Valuables should be left at home unless you have made arrangements with the teacher for special sharing. If your child is missing something be sure to ask your child's teacher. Please be aware of the items in your child's bag. Medication, sharp objects, and opened food are not safe and allowed in children's bags due to the accessibility children have to the cubbies. Teachers will have access to all items on the premises due to the safety and state licensing requirements. We will not replace any missing or broken items. Please do not allow your child to bring in toys, books, personal items, etc. as the center will not be responsible for replacing lost, stolen, or broken toys.

#### **Pesticide Policy:**

If Serendipity Children's Center, Inc. uses any pesticides on the premises. A notice will be posted for families 48 hours prior to when and where the pesticides will be used along with any other information pertaining to the pesticide and its use. The staff will ensure there is no residue left from the pesticide when children are to be present.

#### **Photographs:**

The teaching staff take pictures of all children as a part of our curriculum and post them around the center. Pictures of your child will not be released to any agency without your notification and written permission. If you have any concerns regarding your child's pictures in the building please see the Center Director. A photography permission slip will be filled out during enrollment allowing you to give/refuse permission for photos to be used in the classroom, in Brighthweel, on our website or for advertising purposes.

#### **Physical Exams / Health Records:**

Within 30 days after a child begins care with Serendipity Children's Center, Inc. and as age-appropriate thereafter, your child(ren)s health records must have documentation of the dates of services to show that your child(ren) is current for routine screening tests and immunizations according to the schedule recommended, published in print, and posted on the websites of the American Academy of Pediatrics, the Centers for Disease Control of the United States Public Health Service (CDC-USPHS), and the Academy of Family Practice.

When a child is overdue for any routine health services, parents or legal guardians, must provide evidence of an appointment for those services or evidence of the services being performed before the child's entry into the program and as a condition of remaining enrolled in the program, except for any immunization for which parents are using religious exemption. Families will have 30 business days to have all physical and immunization records up to date.

Health Records must include:

- Current information about any health insurance coverage is required at the time of enrollment, and is to be updated as needed, or at re-enrollment;
- Results of health examinations, showing up-to-date immunizations and screening tests with an indication of normal or abnormal results and any follow-up required for abnormal results
- Current emergency contact information for each child, which is kept up to date by a specified method during the year
- Names of individuals authorized by the family to have access to health information about the child

- Instructions for any of the child's special health needs such as allergies or chronic illness such as (e.g., asthma, hearing or vision impairments, feeding needs, neuromuscular conditions, urinary or other ongoing health problems, seizures, diabetes)
- Supporting evidence for cases in which a child is under-immunized because of a medical condition (documented by a licensed health professional) or the family's beliefs.

Staff implement a plan to exclude the child promptly if a vaccine-preventable disease to which children are susceptible occurs in the program.

### **Pick Up:**

Only individuals on the authorized pick-up list may be permitted to pick up a child. Teachers are required to ask for photo ID from any unrecognizable individual. Siblings may not pick-up unless 18 years of age and may not be on the authorized pick-up list.

Please inform anyone picking up your children that Serendipity Children's Center, Inc. reserves the right to photocopy their ID. Parents are required to write a note to the center of when and who may be picking up their child.

When an emergency situation occurs and a parent calls over the phone to authorize someone new to pick-up their child, the teacher must know the parents voice over the phone. Teachers should never authorize a pick-up over the phone if unsure. A written email from a verified email address with the date and name of person picking up may be an option.

If you call and will be picking up after closing, it is important for the teacher to obtain information regarding your tardiness. Serendipity Children's Center, Inc. charges late fees (see Late Pick Up) at this point, it is at the Management's discretion to complete a charge or not. Our ultimate goal is to support the families not make them feel like an inadequate parent or cause more financial stress in their life. Teachers will consult the Center Director if any parent becomes habitually late at picking up. If late pickups continue, care may be denied or terminated.

### **Pre-Enrollment Requirements:**

Parents are encouraged to tour the center and a Pre-Registration Fee is paid to hold your child's spot. Payment and Rates Information along with Orientation paperwork will be given at this time.

The following paperwork needs to be completed before the child may attend the center:

- Enrollment Form
- Family/Child Intake Form
- Immunization Record
- Photo Authorization
- Registration Fee Paid
- A Signed Contract
- Nap mat form
- Emergency form
- Any other forms or requested items will be required at this time.

### **Program Evaluation:**

Parents participate in our yearly program evaluation by completing anonymous surveys. A summary of results is discussed at a parent meeting, and an action plan is developed based on identified issues and

concerns. Parents are always welcome to offer suggestions or bring up questions at anytime throughout the year. A suggestion box is located in the main building outside of the director's office.

### **Payments:**

Cash, check, money order, or cashier's check may be used to pay tuition and any payments for drop-in care or late fees. Serendipity Children's Center, Inc. does accept credit and debit cards. These payments can be made through the Brightwheel App. Receipts will be given for tuition payments made by cash. No receipts will be given for check payments unless requested by the parent. All cash payments must be handed directly to a member of management, and a receipt for cash will be issued immediately. If a member of management is not available, we ask that you bring cash to them the following day. Your canceled check will serve as your receipt for payments made by check. There will be a \$35.00 fee charged for tuition checks returned by the bank. Returned tuition checks will not be re-deposited. Parents will be responsible for re-issuing cash, money order, or cashier's check. If at any future time the bank returns a parent's check, all future tuition payments must be made by cash, certified check, or money order.

Tuition DOES NOT include fees for field trips, extracurricular activities, overtime, or any other fees that your family may acquire in our care.

### **Pets:**

Serendipity Children's Center, Inc. has a no pet policy. If you bring your pet, please keep them in your vehicle, and do not allow them out on Serendipity Children's Center, Inc. property.

### **Policy and Procedure Changes:**

Policies, procedures, and fees of Serendipity Children's Center, Inc. are subject to change as warranted by the needs of the program. If you have any questions or concerns regarding our policies please contact the Center Director. We offer many ways for families to have input in our program policies. All comments, concerns, and suggestions are welcomed at all times.

### **Portfolios:**

Each child enrolled at Serendipity Children's Center, Inc. will have an Individual Child Portfolio. The teachers will use the portfolios to track the children's developmental progress. Samples of artwork, writing, cutting, observations made by the teachers, and pictures will be added to your child's portfolio throughout their time at Serendipity Children's Center, Inc.. Your child's portfolio will move with them from class to class. Portfolios will be used during parent teacher conferences to highlight growth and development.

### **Parent Code of Conduct:**

Serendipity Children's Center, Inc. requires the parents of enrolled children to behave at all times in a manner consistent with decency, courtesy, and respect. One of the goals of Serendipity Children's Center Inc., is to provide the most developmentally appropriate environment in which a child can grow, learn and develop. Achieving this ideal environment is not only the responsibility of the employees of Serendipity Children's Center Inc. but is the responsibility of each and every parent or adult who enters the center. Parents are required to behave in a manner that fosters this ideal environment. **Parents who violate the Parent Code of Conduct will not be permitted on agency property thereafter.** Please refer to: Parent's Right to Immediate Access for additional information regarding disenrollment of the child when a parent is prohibited from accessing agency property.

Partnering is essential in providing quality care for you and your child. Sometimes situations will arise and you may be upset as a parent. We teach children to talk about how they feel and encourage you to do the same. Sometimes personalities conflict and communication is misinterpreted; however, all adults are expected to talk respectfully and appropriately.

Please practice the following:

- Treat everyone as you would like to be treated
- Address your concerns appropriately to the right person: Lead Teacher, Assistant Teacher, Assistant Director, Center Director, or Owner.
- Taking a minute to calm your body is important. We teach children to take a deep breath and talk when they are ready.
- Talk privately if necessary; do not talk about a child in front of them or in front of any other child.
- Refrain from using profanity and verbally attacking other children or adults.

### **Physical & Verbal Punishment:**

While Serendipity Children’s Center, Inc. does not necessarily support nor condone corporal punishment of children, such acts are not by law permitted in the child care facility. While verbal reprimands may be appropriate it is not appropriate for parents to verbally abuse their child. Doing so may cause undue embarrassment or emotional distress. Parents are always welcome to discuss a behavior issue with the teacher and to seek advice and guidance regarding appropriate and effective disciplinary procedures.

Parents are prohibited from addressing, for the purpose of correction or discipline, a child that is not their own. No parent or other adult may physically punish another parent’s child. If a parent should witness another parent’s child behaving in an inappropriate manner, or is concerned about behavior reported to them by their own child, it is most appropriate for the parent to direct their concern to the classroom teacher and/or Center Director.

Furthermore, it is wholly inappropriate for one parent to seek out another parent to discuss their child’s inappropriate behavior. All behavior concerns should be brought to the classroom teacher or Center Director’s attention. At that point, the teacher and/or Center Director will address the issue with the other parent. Although you may be curious as to the outcome of such a discussion, teachers and/or the Center Director are strictly prohibited from discussing anything about another child with you. All children enrolled in our agency have privacy rights and are further protected by our Confidentiality Policy. You may be assured that we will not discuss anything about your child with another parent or adult visiting the center.



### **Resources:**

Parents have access to current resources in the community located on the Resource Shelf in the hallway outside of the main center door. The program promotes and utilizes all resources to support parents when possible. Please do not hesitate to ask for assistance.

### **Rate Increases/Changes:**

Serendipity Children’s Center, Inc. reserves the right to change any costs or charges, including but not limited to, rates, fees, registration fees, overtime fees, classroom fees, etc. with a minimum of 20 business days notice.

Serendipity Children’s Center, Inc. does an annual automatic rate increase of 3-5%. The increase will occur as of September 1<sup>st</sup> of every year. You will be notified of this increase in March prior to the following school year with pre-registration paperwork.

### **Right to Immediate Access:**

Parents of a child in our care are entitled to immediate access, without prior notice, to their child whenever they are in care at Serendipity Children’s Center as provided by law.

Serendipity Children’s Center will dismiss any child whose parent is prohibited from entering agency property. Due to the parents’ right to immediate access policy, as well as state and federal regulations, Serendipity Children’s Center, Inc. cannot have a child at Serendipity when the child’s parent is prohibited access. This includes parent access to Valley property. Serendipity Children’s Center, Inc. will not agree to any request to maintain a child’s enrollment even if the parent agrees to stay out of the center. Such an agreement is a violation of the law and will not be entertained.

**Ratios:**

The ratios and room capacity are designated by the state of Washington in the DEL. Upon licensing, the center’s rooms are measured, and a calculation is made determining the amount of children allowed for care in each room. The following is our capacity for each room and the staff to child ratio (WAC # 170-295-2090).

If the age is the child is:	Then the staff-to-child ratio is:	And maximum group size is:
Infants (1mo-11mo)	1:4	9
Toddler (12mo – 29mo)	1:7	14
Preschool (30mo-5yr)	1:10	20
School Age (5yr-12yr)	1:15	30

The ratios for NAEYC are slightly different than the ratios for Washington State. To the best of our ability, we will try to follow the ratios determined by NAEYC as long as it allows the program to remain fiscally solvent.

If the age is the child is:	Then the staff-to-child ratio is:	And maximum group size is:
Infants (1mo-11mo)	1:3	6
Toddler (12mo – 29mo)	1:6	12
Preschool (30mo-5yr)	1:8	16
School Age (5yr-12yr)	1:12	24

**Religion:**

Serendipity Children’s Center, Inc. is a privately owned center. We are not affiliated to any one religion and as such do not teach religion. We value all families’ belief systems.

**Reimbursements:**

If you are in need of a reimbursement for any reason, a credit will be issued to your account. Serendipity Children’s Center, Inc. will not issue any “cash back” reimbursements. There is no credit given for vacations, scheduled school holidays, teacher in-service days, child illness, or for closings due to emergency situations, inclement weather or acts of God.

**Registration / Re-Registration Fee:**

Serendipity Children’s Center charges a \$150 annual registration fee upon enrollment and each March thereafter for re-enrollment for the following school year. The registration fee is charged per child and is non-refundable.



### **Sensory:**

We encourage sensory exploration with all types of materials. Teachers will NOT keep your child from playing with any activity unless an allergic reaction occurs. If your child has allergies to shaving cream please let the teachers know.

### **Shoes:**

For safety, sanitary reasons, and for the best learning and play; children will need to wear closed toe shoes to the center. All shoes are to be removed before entering the infant and toddler rooms. If you do not want to remove your shoes, please remain outside the classroom door or wear shoe covers.

### **Signing In / Out:**

It is a licensing requirement that parents sign their children in and out upon arrival and departure with **full signature**. Serendipity uses Brightwheel to obtain your legal signature digitally through the App. In order to ensure that staff are aware of your arrival, please make verbal contact with staff prior to leaving your child in their care. Sign-in sheets will be used to account for children in the case of an emergency evacuation. Failure to provide a legal signature may result in termination.

### **Smoking:**

For the health of all Serendipity Children's Center, Inc. employees, children and associates, smoking is prohibited anywhere on agency property. Parents are prohibited from smoking in the building, on the grounds, and in the parking lot of Serendipity Children's Center, Inc. Parents who are smoking in their cars must dispose of the cigarette prior to entering the parking lot. Please do not drop cigarette butts in the parking lot.

### **Staff Employment by Clients:**

Staff of Serendipity Children's Center Inc. are allowed to work for parents during their off hours. This can include babysitting, house sitting, pet sitting, house cleaning and other duties. Families are prohibited from offering current staff full time employment or duties that conflict with the scheduled needs of Serendipity Children's Center Inc. Parents understand that Serendipity will not be held liable for the actions of staff during their off hours away from Serendipity. In order to have staff babysit for families, Serendipity may require families to sign a waiver of liability prior to babysitting starting.

### **Schedule Changes:**

Parents who wish to change their child's days or times of enrollment at Serendipity Children's Center, Inc. must submit a request to do so two weeks in advance of the proposed change. Schedule changes are subject to a change fee of \$25.00 per time the contract is changed within the calendar year. The Center Director will notify the parents in writing if the new schedule is available. A schedule change will not be considered to be final until a new fee agreement is signed. If the schedule change requires an additional deposit and/or registration fee, the change will also be contingent upon payment of these monies. If the requested schedule is not available parents may choose to continue with the current schedule until such time as the requested schedule becomes available, or may choose to withdraw their child from the program. The day the Center Director receives the requested schedule change will be the date used to tally the two weeks' required notice.

### **Subsidized Care:**

Serendipity Children's Center accepts payments from Child Care Aware of America for children of Active Duty Military Service Members. These payments will be posted to each individual military families account

as they are received. Parents of subsidized children are also required to sign a fee agreement, agreeing to be personally responsible for the payment of tuition, in the event they become ineligible to receive child care subsidies. Serendipity does not accept DSHS child care tuition assistance.

### **Swearing / Cursing:**

No parent or adult is permitted to curse or use other inappropriate language on agency property at any time, whether in the presence of a child or not. Such language is considered offensive by many people and will not be tolerated. If a parent or adult feels frustrated or angry, it is more appropriate to verbally express the frustration or anger using non-offensive language. At NO time shall inappropriate language be directed toward members of the staff.

### **Speed Limit:**

The speed limit on the Tumwater Valley property is 5 MPH or less. There is no exception to this rule. Our number one priority is the safety of the children and families in our care. Please inform anyone picking up or dropping off your children of our 5 MPH speed limit.



### **Technology:**

Serendipity encourages children to explore and learn using different technologies. This may include leapsters, leap pads, iPads, movies etc. Screen time will be limited and approved by management. Families will be notified of all movie screen time in advance. No technology items from home will be allowed in the center.

### **Toilet Training:**

Learning to use the toilet is a big event in a young child's life. Because toilet training is a complex process, there are many issues caregivers and families must consider before and during the process of toilet training for it to be a successful experience for everyone. We believe it is important to have successful potty training at home prior to beginning training in childcare.

Parents will be responsible for supplying diapers or pull-ups and wipes until the child is fully potty trained.

Two weeks into following the potty training procedure if the child shows no progress the teachers will touch base with the parent to discuss the progress and make adjustments as needed.

While potty training, the teachers will continue to use diapers or pull-ups on the child during nap times.

The teachers will use the "Potty Training Chart" to communicate the days progress and successes to the family.

The Staff at Serendipity Children's Center, Inc. determines if the child ready if the child:

- Follows simple directions
- Remains dry for at least 2 hours at a time during the day
- Is dry after nap time
- Has regular and predictable bowel movements (Some may have bowel movements every day and some may go 2-3 days)
- Walks to and from the bathroom, pulls down own pants, and pulls them up again
- Seems uncomfortable with soiled or wet diapers
- Seems interested in the toilet
- Has asked to wear grown-up underwear

Serendipity Children's Center, Inc. feels if the child has most of these skills, then they are probably ready to start toilet training. We feel if the child does not have most of these skills or has a negative reaction to toilet training, we will wait a few weeks or months until most of the skills are mastered.

Serendipity Children's Center, Inc. feels that starting too soon can actually delay the process and cause tears and frustration. Toilet training is much easier when the child is ready.

Sanitation and Safety:

- Serendipity Children's Center, Inc. will provide modified toilet seats with step stool.
- The toilet and equipment will be cleaned with soap and water and disinfected with bleach solution (1/4 cup bleach to 1 gallon water) when the seat or area is visibly dirty and at least once daily.
- Wet or dirty clothes will be placed in a plastic bag that can be sealed tightly, and sent home. Please be sure to check your child's cubby daily.
- Teachers will encourage children to wipe from front to back.
- Teachers and children will properly wash hands after toileting, helping with toileting, cleaning area and handling contaminated items.

### ***Toilet Training Techniques:***

Serendipity Children's Center, Inc. believes in a calm easygoing approach.

Teachers will learn the words the child's family uses for body parts, urine and bowel movements to be consistent with what the child is doing at home (As long as they are appropriate) Teachers will also consult with family about strategies used at home so the process is consistent.

Toilet training involves many steps (discussing, undressing, going, wiping, dressing, flushing, hand washing) and we reinforce the child's success at each step.

The teachers will try and help your child recognize when they are urinating or have a bowel movement. They must be aware of what they are doing before they can do anything about it.

The teachers encourage a team effort involving other children also developmentally ready to begin the potty training process. At Serendipity Children's Center, Inc. we believe children should be shown how to use the toilet by watching other children who are trained or discussing each step and practicing each step without actually using the toilet (Example: have child sit on toilet dressed, flushing toilet).

The teachers will include toilet training into the daily routine such as reading books, songs and games that reinforce the skills needed to toilet train.

Serendipity Children's Center, Inc. encourages parents to dress children in easy to remove clothing to help children be successful in undressing and dressing.

When a child is showing signs of having to use the toilet or tells teachers they have to use the toilet, teachers will take the child into the bathroom, help undress them and help them on to the toilet. They will sit by the child for a few minutes, and not push for immediate results. After a few minutes, the teacher will help the child with the rest of the routine and give praise for the effort or any successes they had.

Teachers never force a child to sit on the toilet against their will or for long periods of time if they do not want to. This could set up a power struggle and negative feeling toward the toilet training.

Teachers never punish for accidents. Occasional accidents are normal.

Teachers will supervise children during toilet training.

Some children with special needs may need additional help and strategies to create a successful toilet training experience. Help will be sought from health professionals and support personnel.

A communication plan will be discussed prior to beginning the potty training process. Serendipity Children's Center staff will document the child's daily progress through filling out a potty training form.

#### **Tuition Discounts:**

Serendipity Children's Center, Inc. offers a 10% discount for the second child, when both children are enrolled full time Monday through Friday. Enrolling three or more children will be discussed with the Director and will be figured on a case by case basis. The Center Director may request a discount be made, but the final decision will be made by the Owner of Serendipity.

#### **Tuition:**

All custodial parents and/or legal guardians are required to sign a Fee Agreement prior to enrollment of their child in Serendipity Children's Center, Inc. However, by allowing your child(ren) to attend care at Serendipity Children's Center, Inc., you are agreeing to pay all current fees and charges incurred while your child is in care. Parents are required to indicate to whom all billing information and correspondence are to be addressed. The aforementioned party will be responsible for all payments made to the center. Please see Legal Separation and Divorce for more information regarding billing of two parties.

#### **Threats:**

Threats of any kind will not be tolerated. In today's society Serendipity Children's Center, Inc. cannot afford to sit by idly while threats are made. In addition, all threats will be reported to the appropriate authorities and will be prosecuted to the fullest extent of the law. While apologies for such behavior are appreciated, the agency will not assume the risk of a second chance. PARENTS MUST BE RESPONSIBLE FOR AND IN CONTROL OF THEIR BEHAVIOR AT ALL TIMES.

#### **Transitions:**

Transitions happen annually at the start of the school year in September. During the last several weeks of August children begin to visit new classrooms and get to know their new teachers.

Children do not typically transition to new classrooms during the year unless special accommodations have been made with management.

Infants may transition up depending on their birthday and this will be on a case by case basis. This transition will be dictated by the staff in both classrooms and parents of the infant. Infants can begin to transition at eleven months of age if ready.

#### **Trial Basis:**

There will be a two week trial period (adjustment time) to determine the suitability of the child to Serendipity Children's Center, Inc. and vice versa. The compatibility of your child to the environment of Serendipity Children's Center, Inc. is very important. If a new child is going to settle into Serendipity Children's Center, Inc. they tend to do so during the trial period. The parent or Serendipity Children's Center, Inc. may cancel care during this time with three days notice or payment in lieu of. To receive a refund during the trial period, the three days notice must be given. The refund will be determined by the number of days in care, and any costs involved during this time.





### **Volunteering:**

Parents are invited and encouraged to be involved in their child's school activities. There are many different ways in which parents can participate and volunteer at the child care center. Parents may volunteer to attend trips, assist teachers, and/or coordinate special events. Teachers will have posted in their classrooms any volunteer opportunities available. Parents not interested in volunteering directly in the classroom may donate items or do maintenance work. These volunteer opportunities are posted in the main office area on the parent bulletin board.

Any parent who volunteers in the classroom on a regular basis will be required to pay for and secure all criminal background checks, as required by our licensing regulations. Any person, including parents, with felony convictions, sex offender convictions and/or open investigations into any criminal activities will not be permitted to volunteer in the classroom or on field trips.

Parents with court orders detailing custodial arrangements will only be permitted to volunteer on days in which they are afforded custody (joint/shared custody arrangement) as per the court order. For example, if a parent is afforded custody on Tuesdays and Wednesdays, that parent will only be able to volunteer on those days. Parents with visitation only (sole/exclusive custody arrangements), will only be permitted to volunteer with the express written permission of the custodial parent.

Parents who volunteer on field trips or participate in activities where there is a charge for admission or the activity will be responsible to pay the fee on their own. Serendipity Children's Center Inc. does not pay for volunteers. Volunteers will always remain under the direct supervision of qualified staff.

Serendipity Children's Center, Inc. reserves the right to make Volunteer assignments.

### **Vacation:**

Vacation deductions are built into your yearly contract. **Your monthly payments will not change.**

### **Valley Membership Requirements:**

We have a wonderful opportunity to be located in and near The Valley Athletic Club. We pride ourselves in keeping a strong relationship with their management and staff. As a result, we use the facility as part of our daily programming.

Children who are four and older, must maintain a minimum of a Serendipity or "S" membership with the Valley Athletic Club. Until your child turns four, he/she is exempt from membership. The paperwork to join The Valley Athletic Club is part of our enrollment process to ensure that when your child is four, we are alerted to that change. At that point, you will be charged for an "S" membership. The cost for the "S" membership is a one-time fee of \$45.00 with a monthly fee of \$12.50 per child paid directly to The Valley Athletic Club. The "S" membership does not allow the child or parent membership other than while the child is in Serendipity's care.

Other memberships are available upon request through The Valley Athletic Club.

### **Violations:**

Violations of any of the policy's in the Parent Handbook, Payment and Rates Information, Health Care Plan, or Disaster / Emergency Plan, can result in termination of care.

### **Visitors:**

Visitors are asked to schedule appointments with the Center Director and are allowed in the child care facility only at the discretion of the Center Director. An employee of Serendipity Children's Center, Inc.

will accompany visitors at all times throughout the center. Visitors will be required to show ID and have their ID photocopied to center records.

**Video:**

The teaching staff may take videos of all children as a part of our curriculum. Videos of your child will not be released to any agency without your notification and written permission. If you have any concerns regarding videos in the building please see the Center Director.



**WAC (Washington Administrative Code):**

Licensed centers are governed by DEL (Department of Early Learning). Their guidelines are known as the WAC. The WAC covers questions you may have regarding childcare. If you do not understand something, please refer to the Center Director. Each classroom is equipped with a copy of the WAC for reference.

**Waiting List:**

If a specific classroom or care schedule is not available, Serendipity Children’s Center, Inc. will develop a waiting list of interested families and will use the following procedures. The waitlist will be prioritized as follows:

- Currently enrolled Serendipity Children’s Center, Inc. families desiring an alternate schedule or classroom
- Siblings of currently enrolled Children at Serendipity Children’s Center, Inc.
- Community at large
- Children of Serendipity Children’s Center, Inc. staff

Waiting lists will be maintained from September 1st of one calendar year to August 31st of the next calendar year for enrollment during that time period. Applications for the waiting list for the upcoming school year will be accepted beginning March 1st each year. The entire waitlist will be purged on August 31st of each year. (For example, Serendipity Children’s Center, Inc. will begin their waitlist for the September 2014-August 2015 school year on February 1, 2014. On August 31, 2014, any families remaining on that list will be purged). Children may only be on the waiting list if they are in the eligible age group or will be in the eligible age group during the wait list year. No payment is necessary to be on the waitlist.

Current Serendipity Children’s Center, Inc. staff and families may place their children on the waiting list at any time and are not required to attend a program tour prior to submitting the waitlist application. Please contact the the Center Director for a waitlist application.

Please call the Center Director to schedule an appointment.

When a space becomes available, Serendipity Children’s Center, Inc. will contact the next family on the waiting list.

- Contact will be made by phone and written notice using the contact information on the waiting list application. (If the contact information on the waiting list application is not current, the family will be passed over and removed from the waiting list. It is the responsibility of the family to keep their contact information updated.)
- A family will have two working days to either accept or decline the offered spot.

- If no answer is received in the allotted time or if the spot is declined, the space will be offered to the next eligible family.
- A notice will be sent to the parents if we are unable to contact them. Serendipity Children’s Center will offer the parents two weeks to contact and reinstate their name to the top of the waiting list in their tier status. The child’s name will be removed from the waiting list after the two weeks if no contact has been made.

**Withdrawing:**

Two weeks written notice is required when withdrawing a child for any reason. If the proper notice is given, any unused tuition and deposit will be refunded within ninety business days of the withdrawal. If the required notice is not given, parents will be charged tuition for two additional weeks.

The parents and child, following their last day of enrollment, are not permitted to re-enter agency property without prior permission of the Center Director. A withdrawn child and his/her parents are required to call and request an appointment with the Center Director if they wish to return to agency property following the last day of enrollment at Serendipity Children’s Center, Inc. Appointments are made at the discretion of the Center Director and are not a right of the withdrawn child or parent.



**This handbook is protected proprietary information.**





## Family Handbook Record of Receipt

I/We, \_\_\_\_\_, the parent(s)/legal guardian(s) of \_\_\_\_\_, acknowledge that I/We have received a copy of Serendipity Children's Center, Inc. Parent Handbook and have been given the opportunity to read the manual and ask questions about policies and I/we understand the policies contained therein and Furthermore agree to abide by the policies set forth in the manual.

I/We understand that the policies described in the Parent Handbook are not conditions of enrollment, and the language does not create a contract between Serendipity Children's Center, Inc. and the parents. Serendipity Children's Center, Inc. reserves the right to alter, amend, or otherwise modify these guidelines, in its sole discretion, without prior notice.

### Parent/Guardian 1

Signature: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Print Name: \_\_\_\_\_

### Parent/Guardian 2

Signature: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Print Name: \_\_\_\_\_